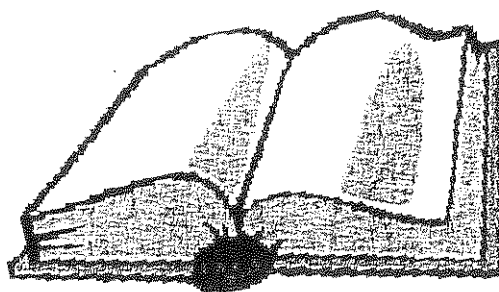


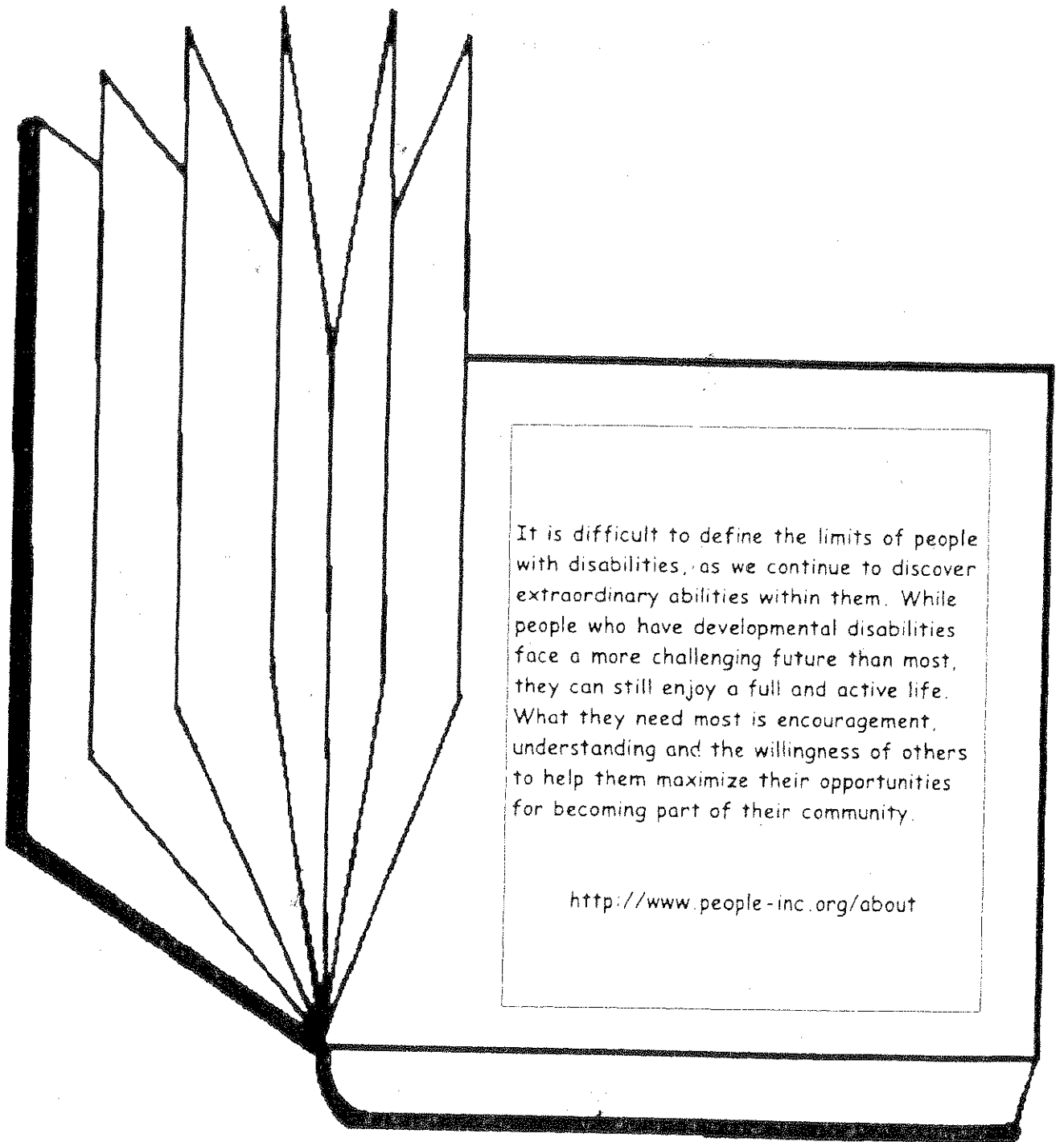
# Reading Ahead

*Literacy for Adults with  
Developmental Disabilities*



**CHAI**

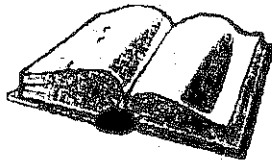
Jewish Family & Children's Service  
Newton, Massachusetts



It is difficult to define the limits of people with disabilities, as we continue to discover extraordinary abilities within them. While people who have developmental disabilities face a more challenging future than most, they can still enjoy a full and active life. What they need most is encouragement, understanding and the willingness of others to help them maximize their opportunities for becoming part of their community.

<http://www.people-inc.org/about>

# Reading Ahead



## Literacy Tutor Manual compiled by

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2003/2004

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Funded through a grant from the  
Massachusetts Developmental Disability Council

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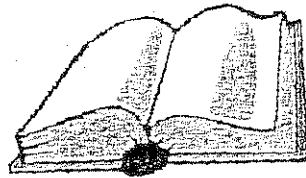
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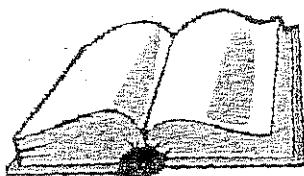
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# Reading Ahead

## Community Housing for Addult Independence



### Student Contract

Date \_\_\_\_\_

I, \_\_\_\_\_ agree to attend tutoring sessions/groups for a period of six months and participate in the monthly planned field trips.

All homework assignments will be completed to the best of my ability.

If at any time, I am unable to keep a tutoring appointment, I agree to give at least a one-day notice to the tutor.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Ilana Gordon-Brown,  
Director of Housing and Program Development

\_\_\_\_\_  
Tutor's Signature

**Reading**

# **Stages of Reading Comprehension**

## Stages of Reading Development: Jeanne Chall

**Stage 0. Prereading: Birth to Age 6.** The prereading Stage is where the learner grows in their control of language, both semantics and syntax. The child is increasing their conceptual knowledge and beginning to develop an understanding of the world around them. The learner relies on their non-visual information and contextual knowledge to begin reading. During this emergent stage the child relies heavily on the contextual information provided by the pictures in the text and by the way the story mimics the spoken language and highly predictable language. The learner during this stage uses logographic information to make guesses about words. The learner also begins to develop insights into the nature of words and begins to realize that words are made up of sounds, and that some of these words have the same beginning and ending sounds. This phonetic-cue phase of reading development helps the child begin to recognize rhyme and alliteration. For the reader to be successful at this stage of learning they need to have many learner centered activities that encourage the learner to experiment with language and to have an opportunity to make the connection between their nonvisual information and the visual information of the text. A top down approach to teaching reading, which follows a whole language model of reading, has shown positive gains in reading performance for the stage 0 reader.

**Stage 1. Initial Reading, or Decoding Stage: Grades 1-2.5, Ages 6-7.** Once the learner is successful in stage 0 and has progressed from the phonetic-cue phase of reading and is becoming more aware of letter/sound relationships the learner has now progressed into the cipher phase of reading and is a Stage 1 reader. During this Stage, the reader often relies heavily on the text and focuses attention on visual information. The child begins gluing to print and sounding out words. Even words that were easily recognized in stage 0 may now be sounded out by the stage 1 reader. The Stage 1 reader is attempting to break the code of print. They realize that letters and letter combinations represent sounds. They also become aware of vowels and vowel sounds. To this child decoding is extremely important. A bottom up approach to teaching reading may be more appropriate for this Stage of development. Teacher directed modeling and instruction on the aspects of decoding is crucial during this stage. This is the one stage where whole language may not be the best approach for the instruction of reading

**Stage 2. Confirmation, Fluency, Ungluing from Print: Grades 2-3, Ages 7-8.** The job of the teacher is to keep the learner in perpetual forward movement. Once the child has become successful at the aspect of decoding it is time to progress forward. No teacher desires a child to be a word caller, or a reader who glues to text. A good reader is a fluid reader, who automatically decodes words, thus freeing up attention for higher levels of comprehension and meaning. As the child progresses through stage 1 they acquire orthographic knowledge of words. They recognize patterns of words and reach a level of automaticity in word recognition. This new found ability enables the reader to become more fluent. Chall often refers to this stage as "more of the same". In other words the learner needs the opportunity to hone the skills of reading in comfortable text and comfortable reading situations. Recreational reading that encourages safe fluent reading. Carver calls this area of reading, rauding. This stage is not for gaining new information or using reading to learn, but it is used to gain control of reading so that when they become stage 3 readers they will be able to use the tool of reading to successfully gain knowledge. Once again the reading emphasis switches to a more whole language approach. The learner should be given the opportunity to read many familiar



texts. The greater the amount of practice and the greater the immersion, the greater the chance of developing the fluency with print that is necessary for the more complex nature of reading to learn.

**Stage 3. Grades 4-8, Ages 8-14: Reading for Learning the New.** Stages 0-2 are considered the developmental stages of reading, "Learning to Read". Stage 3 however is associated with content area reading, or "Reading to Learn". Now the reader must use reading as a tool for acquiring new knowledge. Before the child entered stage 3 of reading the child relied on the environment or the spoken word to acquire new knowledge, but as the child enters stage 3 he/she must use reading to gain novel information. Stage 3 is also characterized by the growing importance of word meaning, prior knowledge and strategic knowledge. In order to acquire new information the learner must bring previous knowledge and experiences to their reading. The reading in this stage is essentially for facts and the reader typically comprehends from a singular viewpoint. Reading during this stage is seen to be both top-down and bottom-up. Students need direct instruction, not necessarily in the aspect of decoding, but in strategy activation and selection as well as comprehension monitoring. Many teachers make the false assumption that just because the learner has learned how to read narrative text, this ability will transfer over to successful reading of expository text and reading to learn.

**Stage 4. Multiple Viewpoints: High School, Ages 14-18.** The essential difference between the Stage 3 reader and the Stage 4 reader is that the Stage 4 reader begins dealing with learning from multiple viewpoints. The successful Stage 3 reader grows in their ability to analyze what they read and react critically to the different viewpoints they encounter. When the learner becomes successful with this type of critical comprehension they have progressed from Stage 3 to Stage 4. Stage 4 readers are able to deal with layers of facts and concepts and have the ability to add and delete schema previously learned. This essential as the learner now interacts with more complex texts that share multiple views and concepts.

**Stage 5. Construction and Reconstruction - A World View: College, Age 18 and Above.** Upon the arrival into Stage 5 of reading the student has learned to read certain books and articles in the degree of detail and completeness that one needs for one's purpose. A Stage 5 reader knows what not to read, as well as what to read. During Stage 5 the reader has acquired the ability to construct knowledge on a high level of abstraction and generality and to create one's own "truth" from the "truth" of others. The more the learner is immersed into one's domain the more conceptual knowledge the reader has obtained. With this sophisticated level of domain specific knowledge the more critical the reader can become. They now have the ability to synthesize critically the works of others and are able to form their own educated stance on the subject.

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## Teaching Reading to First-Level Adults

### *Emerging Trends in Research and Practice*

by Judith A. Alamprese

*Reading has always been a fundamental concept taught in adult basic education (ABE). The methods and contexts for reading instruction, however, have varied over time according to practitioners' theoretical perspectives and belief systems about the reading process. For example, the teaching of reading often has been imbedded in instructional content rather than addressed as a discrete skill. Because of the variations in instructional approach, it sometimes has been difficult to discern the extent to which reading is being taught in ABE programs.*

The past five years have witnessed a national call to improve the teaching of reading in elementary education. Reading is now a priority in key education legislation, such as the Reading Excellence Act and Title 1 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. It has been the subject of research syntheses sponsored by the US Department of Health and Human Service's National Institute on Child Health and Human Development in conjunction with the US Department of Education (DOE). Reading instruction is also one of the key areas under program quality in the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) of 1998.

ABE practitioners' concerns center on teaching reading to first-level learners, generally are defined as those scoring at a 0 to 6th grade equivalent on a standardized reading test or at Level 1 on the National Adult Literacy Survey. First-level adults enter ABE programs with a range of reading skills. This variation in abilities sometimes poses challenges for instructors. The enrollment of first-level learners in ABE programs remains constant: about 17 percent of those participating in programs funded under the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (US Department of Education, 1999). ABE practitioners have voiced a desire to learn about effective instructional methods for them. Furthermore, as states implement the National Reporting System for ABE accountability, ABE staff at all levels have a need to understand the amount of improvement it is reasonable to expect from a first-level learner over a specified time. All of these circumstances have led to the teaching of reading emerging as critical topic

in ABE, particularly as a focus for staff development and program improvement.

### **Emerging Research on Adult Reading**

The literature on teaching reading to children is extensive, but few national studies have examined effective strategies for reading instruction with adults. Most studies on adult reading have been small in scale and descriptive in design. As a result, few empirical data exist about the particular instructional approaches that are associated with reading improvement in adults. To address this gap, the US DOE funded two national studies on reading for adults: the Evaluation of Effective Adult Basic Education Programs and Practices, conducted by the research firm Abt Associates Inc.; and the What Works Study of Adult English as a Second Language Programs, undertaken by the American Institutes for Research. The National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy (NCSALL) is also studying the instructional strengths and needs in reading of adults enrolled in ABE and English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) classes.

### **Key Issues**

Although not based on research on adults, the syntheses presented in the report prepared by the National Reading Panel (2000) provide a useful perspective for understanding key issues in reading instruction. Taking into account the work undertaken by the National Research Council Committee — *Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children* (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998) — National Reading Panel research syntheses examined how critical reading skills are most effectively taught and the instructional methods, materials, and approaches most beneficial for students of varying abilities. The Panel examined three topics in reading: alphabetics (phonemic awareness and phonics instruction), fluency, and comprehension (including both vocabulary and text comprehension instruction). The implications of the Panel's report for teaching adults are that direct instruction on these topics may be beneficial to first-level adult learners, and that teachers must understand adults' relative strengths in these areas prior to beginning instruction. A recent review of the literature on adult reading research (Venezky et al., 1998) supports these findings.

## Questions for ABE

The emerging research on K-12 reading raises issues for teaching first-level adult learners. Will adults be receptive to being taught with a direct instruction method? How much emphasis should be placed on each of the key reading areas? How can adult text materials be incorporated into instruction focused on these reading areas? These questions and others concern instructors as they consider using research in refining their practice. One source of forthcoming information about these questions is Abt Associates' study of reading instruction for first-level learners, which is attempting to answer two critical questions:

- How much do first-level adult learners who participate in ABE programs improve their reading skills and reading-related behaviors after participation?
- How are adults' personal characteristics, as well as the operational and instructional characteristics of ABE programs, related to the amount of improvement in reading skills or reading-related behaviors among first-level learners?

### Studying Direct Instruction

We are attempting to answer the fundamental question of whether adults improve their reading skills as a result of attending ABE programs by examining ABE programs serving English-speaking, first-level learners in reading classes across the country. Our study is also investigating factors that may be associated with learners' improvement: their personal background and prior experience in education and work; the amount that they participate in instruction; the type of reading instruction that they receive; and the characteristics of the ABE program in which they participate.

While learners' background and amount of the instruction they receive are factors often examined in research, the operation of an ABE program is a new area of inquiry. We are attempting to address the gaps of previous studies of adult education programs, for example, National Evaluation of the Adult Education Program (Young, et al., 1994), the Evaluation of the Even Start Program (St. Pierre et al., 1995), and the Evaluation of the National Workplace Literacy Program (Moore et al., 1998). These examined the impact of ABE programs but did not develop in-depth enough information

that allows us to understand the instructional and organizational approaches that local ABE programs use to administer services and produce learner outcomes.

Our assumption is that while quality instruction may be necessary for learners to improve, it may not be sufficient to address all of the needs that adult learners bring to the instructional setting. We are studying the instructional leadership that programs provide, the background and experience of instructors, the types of learner assessment that are used, and the support services that programs provide to learners. Our intent is to develop a better understanding of the ways in which ABE programs can both organize reading instruction and provide the resources to foster participation.

In selecting ABE programs and classes for our study, we are targeting programs offering reading instruction that is organized and structured and taught by individuals with training and or extensive experience in reading instruction. Since prior research (e.g., Young et al., 1994) has indicated that instruction in ABE often is not organized or systematic and thus may not contribute to learner outcomes, our approach has been to exclude programs that would not provide a good test of the study's questions. We also want to determine the extent to which teachers' prior experience or training contributes to learners' growth.

In our initial analyses of five ABE programs, we found structured, organized classes where reading is taught explicitly and includes activities aimed at developing phonemic awareness as well as fluency and comprehension. The amount of time spent on these topics varies with the level of the learners. Classes for learners at the 0 to 3rd grade equivalent level spend more time on phonemic awareness and phonics than classes for learners at the 4th to 6th grade equivalent level. The instructional content moves in a sequence. An attempt is made to build vocabulary with words from the text used in developing reading comprehension. Reading passages used in comprehension exercises are selected for high relevance to adults and are appropriate for the learner's reading level.

Observations of classes indicate that instructors monitor learners by moving around the room to make sure that they are on task and providing feedback

by correcting a mistake when it is made. Teachers foster high learner engagement by involving all participants in the class, by having learners take turns working at the board to complete exercises, and by encouraging all learners' participation in discussion.

To provide opportunities for learners to practice the knowledge and skills that they are learning, teachers use exercises to guide learners in developing their reading skills. They use a variety of learning modalities, including oral reading, the completion of exercises on the board, and group recitation. They also have learners complete out-of-class assignments. Instructors give concrete feedback; offer verbal praise when a learner gives a correct response or demonstrates initiative; encourage self-monitoring by pointing out specific strategies; and elicit verbal praise from other learners. In addition, teachers attempt to involve all participants by asking frequent questions, calling on learners by name, having learners take turns in oral reading, providing responses to learners' written exercises, asking learners to volunteer to participate in class exercises, and providing opportunities for learners to ask questions in class.

The instructors organize their reading instruction into a series of exercises or activities. They have an overall plan for the semester, term, or session, and their instructional activities follow a sequence based on the reading framework that they are using. Those who have been trained in reading instructional approaches such as the Slingerland Approach, the Wilson Reading System, and the Lindamood-Bell Learning Process are likely to adapt lesson plans these training programs provide. Other ABE teachers create their own lesson plans, which include instruction on the reading components (e.g., word analysis and word recognition, vocabulary development, comprehension development) in various amounts of time and sequence. The emphasis on any one reading component depends on learners' reading level and specific instructional needs. In carrying out these lessons, instructors use a variety of materials, including those produced by the reading programs noted above, as well as commercially produced materials, artifacts such as the newspaper, and exercises they create. The classes are based on a predetermined set of activities that may vary depending on learners' pace and progress (Alamprese, 2001).

### Learners' Perspectives

Adults participating in the study are asked to describe which aspects of the instructional process facilitate or impede their learning as well as their perceptions of their experience in the ABE program. Participants in the first group of five ABE programs have cited the pace and structure of teaching, the repetition of content, the feedback provided to them, and instructors' personal interest in their well-being as important factors affecting their learning. These adults also have a high rate of attendance (67 percent), and many have enrolled in more than one term or semester in the program. Overall, they assess their experience in the reading classes as positive, productive, and motivating (Alamprese, 2001).

### Conclusion

The instructional methods used by teachers in the first group of programs in this study are consistent with the research reported by the National Reading Panel and the synthesis of reading produced by Venezky and colleagues. Since the data collection is not yet complete, an analysis of the relationship between these methods and learners' capacity to improve their reading skills is not yet available. The study is scheduled for completion in 2002, when the final results will be available. In the interim, however, the trends in instruction that are being documented in the study offer some insight into current reading instructional practices that are of interest to teachers serving first-level learners and who are interested in offering group-based instruction.

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#### **About the Author**

*Judith A. Alamprese* is an educational researcher with Abt Associates, in Washington, DC. She has worked closely with many states, including Connecticut and Pennsylvania, on adult education change initiatives, and has conducted a variety of studies of ABE over the past 15 years.

# Techniques for Teaching Beginning-Level Reading to Adults

by Ashley Hager

*I have been teaching beginning-level reading (equivalent to grade 0-2) at the Community Learning Center in Cambridge, MA, for the past eight years. The majority of students in my class have either suspected or diagnosed reading disabilities (dyslexia). The difficulty they experience learning to read is as severe as the urgency they feel about mastering the task. One of my students, a former Olympic athlete, had to turn down a job offer as a track coach because of his inability to read the workout descriptions. He describes his life as "an ice cream that he is unable to lick."*

Little research is available on the most effective methods for teaching reading to beginning-level adults. My continuing challenge has been to determine how reading acquisition research conducted with children can be applied to teaching reading to adults. In this article, I describe the techniques I have found most useful; I hope other teachers working with beginning readers will find them helpful.

## Our Class

This year our class includes nine students: six men and three women. Three are from the United States, five are from the Caribbean, and one is from Ethiopia. Their ages range from late 20s to late 50s and all are employed. Their educational experiences range from completing four to 12 years of school; one student has a high school diploma. One student has documented learning disabilities (LD). Students typically enter my class knowing little more than the names of the letters and a handful of letter sounds. They are usually only able to write their name and, in most cases, the letters of the alphabet. However, one student had never held a pencil before he entered my class.

| Typical Lesson Plan for a Three-Hour Class |            |
|--|------------|
| Component                                  | Time (min) |
| Phonological Awareness                     | 10         |
| Word Analysis                              | 20         |
| Word Recognition "Sight Words"             | 10         |

|                         |    |
|-------------------------|----|
| Spelling                | 20 |
| BREAK                   | 10 |
| Oral Reading (Accuracy) | 20 |
| Oral Reading (Fluency)  | 35 |
| Comprehension           | 25 |
| Writing                 | 30 |
|                         |    |

Our class meets two evenings a week for three hours each evening. Because skilled reading depends on the mastery of specific subskills, I find it helpful to teach these explicitly. I organize the class into blocks of time in which, with the help of two volunteers, I directly teach eight components of reading: phonological awareness, word analysis, sight word recognition, spelling, oral reading for accuracy, oral reading for fluency, listening comprehension, and writing. These components embody the skills and strategies that successful readers have mastered, either consciously or unconsciously. My curriculum also includes an intensive writing component. Over the last 30 years, a significant amount of research has compared the effectiveness of different approaches to teaching beginning reading to children. It consistently concludes that approaches that include a systematically organized and explicitly taught program of phonics result in significantly better word recognition, spelling, vocabulary, and comprehension (Chall, 1967; Curtis, 1980; Stanovich 1986; Adams, 1990; Snow et al., 1998). For this reason, I directly teach the structure of the English language using a phonics-based approach.

I draw from a number of phonics-based reading programs, including the Wilson Reading System, the Orton-Gillingham System, and the Lindamood-Phoneme Sequencing Program (LiPS; see the "Blackboard" on page 31 for contact information). The Wilson Reading System is a multisensory, phonics-based program developed specifically for adults. Unlike phonics-based programs for children, the Wilson system is organized around the six syllable types, which enables even beginning level adults to read works with somewhat sophisticated vocabulary (see the box on page 4 for the six syllable types). The Orton-Gillingham program is a phonics-based program

similar to the Wilson Reading System but designed for dyslexic children. Students learn about syllables much later in the program. I find particularly helpful the Orton-Gillingham technique for learning phonetically irregular sight words. The LiPS Program is useful for helping students acquire an awareness of individual sounds in words. This ability, referred to as phonemic awareness, is a prerequisite for reading and spelling.

## **Phonological Awareness**

Phonological awareness, which involves the ability to differentiate and manipulate the individual sounds, or phonemes, in words, is the strongest predictor of future reading success for children (Adams, 1995). No research exists that describes the affects of phonological awareness on reading for adults. However, I have found that teaching phonological awareness to my beginning-reading adults significantly improves their reading accuracy and spelling, especially for reading and spelling words with blends.

Three phonological tasks that I use with my students, in order of difficulty, are auditory blending, auditory segmenting, and phonemic manipulation. Auditory blending involves asking students to blend words that the teacher presents in segmented form. For example, I say "/s/-/p/-/l/-/a/-/sh/" and the students responds with "/splash/." Auditory segmenting is exactly the opposite. I present the word "/sprint/" and the student must segment the word into its individual sounds "/s/-/p/-/r/-/i/-/n/-/t/." Phonemic manipulation, which is the strongest predictor of reading acquisition, is also the most difficult. The student must recognize that individual phonemes may be added, deleted, or moved around in words.

The following exchange is an example of a phonemic manipulation task. I ask the student to repeat a word such as "bland." Then I ask the student to say the word again, changing one of the phonemes. For example, "Say it again without the "/l/." The student responds with "/band/." While phonological awareness does not include the student's ability to associate sounds with letter symbols, and tasks are presented orally, the research concludes that the most effective way to promote phonemic awareness is in conjunction with the teaching of sound-to-symbol relationships (Torgesen, 1998).

## Word Analysis

Word analysis, or phonics, involves teaching the alphabetic principle: learning that the graphic letter symbols in our alphabet correspond to speech sounds, and that these symbols and sounds can be blended together to form real words. Word analysis strategies enable students to "sound out" words they are unable to recognize by sight. Explicit, direct instruction in phonics has been proven to support beginning reading and spelling growth better than opportunistic attention to phonics while reading, especially for students with suspected reading disabilities (Blackman et al., 1984; Chall, 1967, 1983). Beginning readers should be encouraged to decode unfamiliar words as opposed to reading them by sight, because it requires attention to every letter in sequence from left to right. This helps to fix the letter patterns in the word in a reader's memory. Eventually, these patterns are recognized instantaneously and words appear to be recognized holistically (Ehri, 1992; Adams, 1990).

I use the Wilson Reading System to teach phonics because the six syllable types are introduced early on. This enables even beginning-level adults to read words that are part of their oral vocabulary and overall cognitive abilities. After learning the closed syllable rule, for example, students are able to read three-syllable words such as "Wisconsin," "fantastic," and "Atlantic." Reading multisyllabic words provides my students, who have acquired a history of reading failure, with an unexpected sense of accomplishment and opens possibilities for them. Recognizing syllable types is important because the syllable pattern determines the sound of the vowel and how the word must be pronounced.

| Syllable Types                   |   |
|----------------------------------|---|
| SYLLABLE TYPE                    | DESCRIPTION   |
| Closed Syllable (vc/cv)          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- one vowel per syllable</li><li>- ends with one or more consonants</li><li>- the vowel has a short sound</li></ul> <i>example:</i> pit, bath, splash, mitten |
| Vowel-Consonant-e Syllable (vce) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- one vowel, then a consonant, then an e</li><li>- the first vowel has a long sound</li></ul>   |

|                                      |  |
|--------------------------------------|--|
|                                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the e is silent</li> </ul> <i>example: hope, mine, bedtime</i>  |
| Open Syllable (v/cv), (vc/v)         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- one vowel</li> <li>- ends with the vowel</li> <li>- vowel has a long sound</li> </ul> <i>example: me, so, flu, why</i>  |
| R-Controlled Syllable                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- one vowel, followed by an r</li> <li>- vowel sound is neither short or long</li> <li>- vowel sound is controlled by the r</li> <li>- /ar/ as in "car," /or/ as in "Ford," /er/ , /ir/ , /ur/ all sound alike as in "her," "bird," "church"</li> </ul> |
| The Consonant-LE Syllable            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- has three letters: a consonant, an "l," and an "e"</li> <li>- the e is silent</li> <li>- the consonant and the "l" are blended together</li> </ul> <i>example: little, grumble, table</i>   |
| The Double-Vowel Syllable            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- two vowels side-by-side making one sound</li> <li>- usually the first vowel is long, and the second is silent</li> </ul> <i>example: maid, may, leaf, seen, pie, goat</i>   |
| <i>Credit: Wilson Reading System</i> |  |

I have found that the Wilson Reading System Sound Tapping technique is a particularly effective way to teach decoding. In this technique, each sound in a word is represented by one tap. Students tap the first sound with their index finger and thumb, the second sound with their middle finger and thumb, the third sound with their ring finger and thumb, etc. If the student runs out of fingers, he or she returns to the index finger. Digraphs — two letters that make one sound (/sh/, /ch/, /th/, /ck/, /ph/) — are represented with one tap. Example: bed = 3 sounds, 3 taps; shed = 3 sounds, 3 taps; stint = 5 sounds, 5 taps. This technique helps students to hear all the sounds in a word.

## **"Sight Word" Recognition**

Since many of the words that appear most frequently in print are phonetically irregular, even beginning readers must learn to recognize some words by sight. Students with reading disabilities have typically relied almost entirely on their ability to memorize words. In most cases, however, their strategies for remembering the way words look in print have proved ineffective. I have experienced some success in teaching sight words using the Visual-Auditory-Kinesthetic-Tactile (V-A-K-T) method that is part of the Orton- Gillingham program. The VAKT method, which emphasizes memorization through visualization, involves asking the student to say the name of each letter in a word and to trace each letter with his or her finger in the air before covering the word and attempting to spell it on paper. The VAKT method may be used to help students with both the reading and spelling of phonetically irregular words. To avoid unnecessary frustration, it is best to tell beginning readers which words they should decode and which words they must recognize by sight.

## **Spelling**

Spelling is an effective way to reinforce both word analysis skills and automatic word recognition. Research consistently indicates that fluent, skilled readers (both children and adults) make use of spelling patterns when they read and, conversely, reading itself reinforces knowledge of spelling patterns (Adams, 1995). Spelling for practicing word analysis skills and spelling for promoting word recognition (usually of phonetically irregular words), however, involve different tasks and call for different teaching techniques. The VAKT method, described earlier, is a process for teaching learners how to spell phonetically irregular words. When dictating phonetically regular words, include only those words that include letter sounds and spelling rules that have been taught directly.

An especially effective technique for the spelling of phonetically regular words is the LiPS technique. This involves asking students to put down a poker chip for each sound they hear. After identifying the correct number of sounds in the word, students locate the vowel sound and place a different-colored chip over the chip that represents the vowel sound. Only after they have identified the sounds and isolated the vowel sound are students asked to select the letter symbols that represent the sounds in the word. This places a lighter burden on short-term and working memory.

For beginning-level readers who are native speakers of English, it is important to include nonsense words as part of dictation practice. Nonsense words require the student to use word attack strategies as opposed to sight recognition.

## **Oral Reading**

Oral reading builds accuracy and fluency, both of which contribute to improved reading comprehension. It is also the most practical way for me to monitor a student's progress. It gives a student an opportunity to practice applying word attack and word recognition skills in context. Because reading for fluency and reading for accuracy involve different objectives and require different materials, I find it useful to teach and evaluate them as two separate activities.

Oral reading for accuracy gives students an opportunity to use the word analysis skills they have been taught directly, so I choose reading selections from controlled texts. During accuracy reading, the emphasis is on using word analysis knowledge to decode unfamiliar words. The goal of fluency reading, on the other hand, is to encourage students to read smoothly and with expression. When asking my students to do fluency reading, I do not interrupt the flow of the reading to discuss the content of the text or to analyze a particular spelling pattern. If the student makes a mistake, I provide the word. Because it is difficult to find materials that are easy enough for a beginning reader to read fluently, I often address fluency in the context of rereading material students have first read for accuracy. The Wilson Reading System describes a technique for promoting fluency called penciling that I have found particularly useful. I encourage the student to read more than one word in a breath by scooping a series of words together with a pencil. First, I model how the sentence should be read. For example: "The man with the hat is big." Eventually, students are able to pencil the sentences for themselves but, at the beginning, I scoop words into phrases for them.

When working on oral reading for either accuracy or fluency, I divide the class up according to ability. I assign my teaching volunteers to work with the higher-level groups. Periodically, I pair stronger readers to act as student teachers with their less skilled classmates.



Before being paired with a less skilled reader, however, student teachers receive explicit instruction in providing decoding clues and handling errors. I find this activity effective for two reasons. First, by teaching someone else, the more skilled student teachers consolidate their own knowledge and become cognizant of their own relative progress. Second, the more-skilled readers become a source of inspiration and support for the less-skilled readers in the class.

## **Comprehension**

For readers at the 0-3rd grade level, I teach higher-level comprehension skills using materials other than those the students can read themselves. In my class, critical thinking usually takes place in the context of a classroom debate. Topics I have found particularly conducive to a heated discussion include "Why do you think it is or is not appropriate to hit your children when they misbehave?" and "Why do you think there is so much crime in this country?"

Using photographs is also effective in building higher-level comprehension skills. I ask questions such as "What do you think the people in the photograph are feeling?" "How can you tell?" or "What do you think may have happened to make them feel that way?" Open-ended questions encourage students to make inferences, draw conclusions, and express opinions.

## **Conclusion**

Progress can be excruciatingly slow for beginning-level adult readers. The volunteers who work in my class are struck by the lack of novelty in my classes. Each class follows the same routine (see the Typical Lesson Plan) and a significant amount of class time is spent reviewing previously taught skills and rereading texts. For beginning-level readers, and especially for those with reading disabilities, a predictable routine helps to alleviate anxiety. Students get upset when the class does not follow its expected course. The volunteers are also surprised that students do not feel insulted or embarrassed working with the letters of the alphabet and reading texts that may appear babyish. On the contrary, after years of only using a hit or miss approach, my students are extremely relieved to discover that reading involves patterns of letters with predictable sounds.

One student describes his early experience with reading: "When I was in grade school, I would listen to the other kids read aloud and I had no idea

how they knew that those letters said those words. When it was my turn, all I could do was guess. Now it makes sense! It's like I found the key."

The challenge of teaching reading to beginning-level adults can be daunting. In my opinion, however, teaching at the beginning level is also the most rewarding. It is extremely moving to witness an adult who, after years of struggling with the sounds of individual letters, is able to read a letter from a family member or a note that his or her child brings home from school.

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## Reading Assessment

### Running Record Notation



= Try Again. Teacher asks student to try again.



= Repetition. An arrow may indicate how many words a reader read more than once.



= The reader self-corrects a miscue. Write SC beside the miscue.



= Put a circle where a word is omitted.



= Asks for help. The reader asks for help.



= Teacher tells the reader the word.



= The word is read correctly.



= Write in a word that is inserted.

If a word is read incorrectly, write what the reader said.

Example sentence:

✓ ✓ and ✓ ✓ ✓ <sup>SC</sup>  
in ✓ ^ ✓

The man with the dog ran into the dark garage.

## The SQ3R Reading Strategy

### S-Survey Q-Question 3R-Read, Recite, Review

First introduced by Francis Robinson in 1941, this strategy involves constructing an overview of the reading and is known for its question asking steps.

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#### S-Survey

Survey the pages you are assigned to read by skimming and scanning to get an idea of what you will be reading.

#### Q-Question

Turn the headings of each section into questions to direct your reading and thinking.

#### R-Read

As you read each section, search for answers to your questions and select main ideas.

#### R-Recite

To ensure your recall of the material, make sure you can recite key ideas and important details.

#### R-Review

While you read, take breaks to review the ideas presented to that point.

<http://www.rose-hulman.edu/lc/sq3r.html>

## Errors in Oral Reading

**Mispronunciation** These include beginning consonant sounds, ending consonant sounds, simple (short) vowel sounds, and complex (long) vowel sounds. They occur when the student fails to associate the correct sounds with the letters. If he does not know the sounds of consonants, consonant blends and vowels, the student will probably experience difficulty in sounding out words. The skills used in decoding words in order to pronounce them correctly are called word attack or phonic skills.

**Omissions** The reader leaves out or omits words in a sentence. This may be due to carelessness or too fast reading, and may be easily corrected by cautioning the student. Or he may be deliberately skipping the word because he can't pronounce it.

**Additions** This refers to words being added to those printed. As with omissions, this error may be due to carelessness or overly rapid reading. It may also be due to the student's not understanding the sentence and feeling that the added word makes it clearer.

**Substitutions** A word is substituted orally for the word that is printed. This error isn't too serious if the substitution is reasonable and doesn't happen too frequently. It is more serious if substitutions occur frequently and distort the meaning of the sentence. It can indicate carelessness, reading too fast, or that the material is too difficult for the student to understand.

**Reversals** These are errors in which individual letters are confused with similar ones, the order of the letters is confused to form another word, or the order of the words in the sentence is rearranged. Faulty letter recognition or faulty left-to-right eye movement is generally the cause.

**Repetition** This refers to a habit of repeating words or phrases that have already been read, giving the reading a halting or jerky sound. Poor word recognition or too difficult material often causes it. Trying to understand what he's reading, the student stops and repeats.

**Sight Vocabulary** These are words that a student can read without sounding them out. A student who consistently fails to recognize familiar words needs to practice with flash cards to develop his sight vocabulary. He also needs to learn the meaning and correct usage of missed words.

**Comprehension** This term refers to how well a student understands what he reads. Comprehension may be low because of lack of concentration, poor word recognition, lack of word attack or pronunciation skills, and poor vocabulary. To evaluate a student's ability to comprehend and recall a story, it's best to use material that is well within his ability level. If he has difficulty decoding the words, he'll find it hard to grasp the meaning of the sentence. If he has to struggle with a sentence, he'll probably lose sight of the main idea of the paragraph.

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## Reading Methods and Learning Disabilities

LDA Newsbriefs Education Committee  
Learning Disabilities Association of America  
Newsbriefs  
March/April 1998

### Introduction

Reading instruction is designed to teach two elements of reading: mechanics and comprehension. While the foundation for reading begins at birth, the focus of instruction from preschool through third grade is reading mechanics, and reading comprehension is the focus from the third grade into early adulthood. It cannot be assumed that a child with learning disabilities will master the mechanics of reading by third grade. Thus, it is critical that appropriate reading instruction is available throughout his/her school career. Reading mechanics and comprehension comprise various skill levels that are typically taught in a progressive fashion. Skill levels involved in reading mechanics include pre-reading, decoding and fluency. Pre-reading skills build upon an individual's growing range of experiences that develop awareness and appreciation of printed words. Individuals should be encouraged to be aware of words wherever they appear, e.g., on grocery labels, household objects, billboards, and the like. Individuals can acquire a more sophisticated understanding of written language by learning:

- the alphabet, including the names, sounds, and shapes of letters, and how to write them;
- that English has a left to right directionality;
- that words are made up of letters and syllables;
- that words are made up of sound elements or phonemes, and by learning the practical application of the relationship between sounds and their representative letters by counting the sounds in a word, through rhyming games and exercises, phonemic substitutions, and creating nonsense words by substituting or rearranging phonemes (phonological awareness).

### Decoding

Decoding is the process translating a written word into a spoken word ("cracking the code"). An individual who has developed adequate decoding

skills can begin to acquire fluency when reading no longer requires a conscious, deliberate effort. When fluent, reading becomes automatic and consists of word recognition rather than sounding out and combining syllables necessary to decode words.

Teaching decoding provides students with the keys to unlock new words. Teaching the regular phonetic patterns of English can do this. These rules can be applied to words with which the student is already familiar. New words are then introduced beginning with simple words and working through more complex words. Finally, irregular phonemic patterns can be introduced and eventually mastered.

### **Comprehension Skills**

Individuals typically shift their attention to reading comprehension once they have established appropriate mechanical skills (decoding).

Comprehension skills, like mechanical skills, usually build progressively from fundamental to more sophisticated levels. Therefore, it has traditionally been helpful for individuals to learn to read for factual information before they begin to compare and evaluate the information they read. It will normally be easier for an individual to learn to read and comprehend material at these two levels before learning analysis and synthesis.

Reading for factual information requires that the sequence of events and the details of a story be followed so that, for example, it is possible to read a murder mystery and solve the story's dilemma or to understand how it was resolved.

Learning to compare and evaluate information from different sources requires the reader to be able to derive the main ideas from a text and isolate its organizing idea or thesis. This fundamental level of critical reading allows the reader to apply evaluative techniques like comparing and contrasting what was read in order to solve and verify statements.

The more advanced critical reading skills of analysis and synthesis allow the reader to draw salient conclusions and to make reasonable inferences from the information contained in the text. In addition, these skills allow the reader to engage the text with greater sophistication and to evaluate materials for relevance, consistency, and bias.



## Reading: A Problem for Many Persons with Learning Disabilities

For the person with learning disabilities, the process of learning to read can break down with reading mechanics or comprehension, and at any of the specific skill levels. It is also important to note that children with learning disabilities do not always acquire skills in the normal developmental sequence.

If an individual does not develop adequate phonemic awareness during the pre-reading period, effective decoding may not be possible, which influences the development of fluent reading and comprehension skills. Also, children with learning disabilities often come to the reading task with oral language comprehension problems. When assessing and planning for instruction, consideration of these oral language comprehension problems may facilitate acquisition of reading comprehension.

No single reading method will be effective for all students with learning disabilities. Most individuals with learning disabilities will benefit from the application of a variety of methods. Instructors need a repertoire of instructional methods.

Teachers should be able to appropriately and systematically modify or combine methods, and utilize different methods in order to meet an individual's changing needs. Selecting the appropriate program to apply to the student is not a simple matter, and requires a careful assessment of where the student is in the developmental process. It is not uncommon, for example, to observe an individual with all the pre-reading skills, numerous comprehension skills, and simple decoding skills acquired during the student's progression through mechanical reading instruction. Because there may be a lack of understanding of the sophisticated decoding skills needed, reading with fluency suffers. Students with learning disabilities should be provided with sound strategic approaches that empower them as readers, rather than be allowed to learn and internalize incorrect practices.

## **Selecting the appropriate method**

A significant part of selecting appropriate instructional approaches is understanding the learning profile of an individual. A diagnostic program is necessary to identify students with learning disabilities. A cognitive profile is also necessary to determine precisely what students' needs are, their strengths and weaknesses, whether they have difficulty with working memory, if they have inadequate language skills, etc. Students with learning disabilities need to be taught strategic approaches explicitly. They need to have ideas made conspicuously clear to them.

Persons with learning disabilities who need to work on reading mechanics frequently respond to explicitly taught code-emphasis developmental reading methods such as phonic, linguistic, or multisensory approaches. Some of the more popular approaches are briefly described below.

**Phonics approach.** The phonics approach teaches word recognition through learning grapheme-phoneme (letter-sound) associations. The student learns vowels, consonants, and blends, and learns to sound out words by combining sounds and blending them into words. By associating speech sounds with letters the student learns to recognize new and unfamiliar words.

**Linguistic Method.** This method uses a "whole word" approach. Words are taught in word families, or similar spelling patterns, and only as whole words. The student is not directly taught the relationship between letters and sounds, but learns them through minimal word differences. As the child progresses, words that have irregular spellings are introduced as sight words.

**Multisensory Approach.** This method assumes that some children learn best when content is presented in several modalities. Multisensory approaches that employ tracing, hearing, writing, and seeing are often referred to as VAKT (visual, auditory, kinesthetic, tactile) methods. Multisensory techniques can be used with both phonics and linguistic approaches.

**Neurological Impress Technique.** This is a rapid-reading technique. The instructor reads a passage at a fairly rapid rate, with the instructor's voice directed into the student's ear. The teacher begins as the dominant reading voice, but gradually the student spends more time leading these sessions. Students who have learned mechanics without adequately learning reading fluency frequently benefit from this, as do students who read slowly or who hesitate over a number of words but are able to identify most of the words in a sentence. A student is directed to read a passage without errors. This method functions most effectively when it is practiced for short periods every day.

**Language Experience Approach.** The language experience approach uses children's spoken language to develop material for reading. This approach utilizes each student's oral language level and personal experiences. Material is written by the child and teacher for reading using each child's experience. This can be done in small groups and individually. Familiarity with the content and the vocabulary facilitate reading these stories. Each child can develop a book to be read and re-read. This approach helps children know what reading is and that ideas and experiences can be conveyed in print.

**Reading Comprehension Support.** Persons with learning disabilities who need work on reading comprehension often respond to explicitly taught strategies which aid comprehension such as skimming, scanning and studying techniques. These techniques aid in acquiring the gist, and then focus is turned to the details of the text through use of the cloze procedures. The cloze procedure builds upon a student's impulse to fill in missing elements and is based upon the Gestalt principle of closure. With this method, every fifth to eighth word in a passage is randomly eliminated. The student is then required to fill in the missing words. This technique develops reading skills and an understanding not only of word meaning but also of the structure of the language itself.

### **Conclusions**

Persons with learning disabilities will typically require a variety of instructional approaches in order to make their educational experiences more productive. **There is no one best approach to teach reading to students with learning disabilities.** There are many reading methods

available with ongoing debate about which one is preferable. It is critical that instructors understand both the student and the various reading methods available if the student is to have the best possible learning experience. The importance of a comprehensive evaluation that will result in prescription for intervention cannot be over-emphasized. As important, is the notion that teachers must have the ability to effectively and systematically alter various methods to meet the needs of individual children with learning disabilities.

## Using a Multisensory Approach to Help Struggling Adult Learners

by Gladys Geertz

*I have been a teacher for about 25 years. When I taught elementary school, it seemed that most kids learned to read almost by osmosis. Even the students of some truly lackadaisical teachers usually learned to read. But what about the children who didn't? I spent many hours working on ways to help these special children, sometimes finding a technique that helped, other times passing a child on to the next grade in hope that another teacher would find the key. What happened to these kids? They are the adults I work with every day at the Anchorage Literacy Project (ALP) in Anchorage, AK. Because no one ever found the answer, eventually many of them became frustrated and dropped out of school. Some of them graduated, but they still could not read.*

About eight years ago, I observed the Slingerland technique being used with children in Slingerland classrooms in the Anchorage schools, and with adults at ALP. The Slingerland technique uses multisensory teaching techniques from Orton-Gillingham that were adapted for the classroom by Beth Slingerland (Slingerland, 1996). Orton-Gillingham developed their teaching techniques working one-on-one with dyslexic children and those with specific language disabilities. A colleague and I developed a program that uses these techniques in classroom settings with adult, low-level reading students. What differentiates our method from the Slingerland method is that we move through a lesson more quickly, teaching more concepts in a day than would be taught in an elementary school class.

### Our Program

The ALP multisensory classes consist mostly of students who have gone through the school system in the United States. Some are dropouts; others are high school graduates. They range in age from 18 to 75 years. Our classes are limited to 15 students, but some classes have only four or five. All of our teachers are trained in the Slingerland method, and as of this writing, we have three instructors in the multisensory program who teach a total of nine multisensory classes. Two are spelling classes, three are a combination of reading and spelling, and four are reading classes at various levels, ranging from first to approximately 10th grade level. Each class

meets three days a week for an hour and a half per class. Our quarter lasts 10 weeks.

Our classes are not open entry. We continue to accept new students for the first two weeks, but then we close the classes because it is too difficult for new students to catch up. The class atmosphere is casual, but the instructor is in charge. We have found that most adults relish humor and the feeling of camaraderie. Each group tends to become close-knit, and we foster group development.

We have expanded and modified the Slingerland techniques for use with adults with and without language disabilities. The modifications are minor; for example, we do not use tracing procedures (going over the same letter many times) as much with our students. Since our students are adults, and many of them are familiar with the letters, we require them to trace a letter three times, instead of the 10 or 20 that may be required in elementary school. We also proceed more quickly to paper and pencil tasks, rather than spending a lot of time using the pocket chart or board. We also introduce three or four letters during each class session; an elementary teacher may only introduce one or two letters a day. At the beginning of our basic classes, we discuss our teaching procedures with the students, explaining that because they have missed some of the educational experiences necessary for learning, we are starting over.

### **A Success-Oriented Program**

The multisensory approach is a success-oriented program. We only expect students to know what they have been taught. We *provide* instruction, *guide* the students through a successful learning experience, and then *reinforce* this successful learning experience. We make sure that all students leave the classroom feeling that they have experienced success.

We begin with a single unit of sight, sound, or thought, and then proceed to the complex combinations of these units. We start with sight and sound association, following the same routine day after day, and adding a few consonant letters and then, slowly, the vowels. We usually begin with the short /i/ vowel sound, and the consonant sounds of /n/, /t/, and /p/, using the sequence in *Angling For Words* by Carolyn G. Bowen (1983). (Teachers could conceivably introduce letters in any sequence, but it is practical to start with high-frequency letters and those that correspond to a

selected text.) We spell and read words from these letters, and then we move on. The time involved in teaching the letter sounds depends on the needs of the particular group of students.

Once the sounds are learned, students move on to the more complex tasks of reading and spelling words, putting these words into sentences, and then mastering paragraphs. With these basic skills, students are able to handle more complex reading and writing material.

### A Sample Multisensory Lesson

How does a typical multisensory lesson unfold? People tend to learn through different or unique stimuli. Some of us learn better visually, some auditorily, and others kinesthetically. I have found that most people probably learn best by using two of these modalities. The multisensory technique makes use of all these modalities and combines them into one simultaneous procedure. It requires learners to see, hear, speak, and do at the same time. *We follow a set pattern of seven steps in every lesson.* This strict adherence to structure provides a consistent, expectable routine that frees students to concentrate on learning.

From the first day of class, we begin class with oral language skills, because the spoken word is much more comfortable than the written word to a low-level reader. First, we, the teacher and the learners, talk, using complete sentences. We encourage each student to participate. Some oral language questions concern the students personally: "How long does it take you to get to class?" "How do you get to class?" "What is your favorite restaurant and why?" "What is your favorite holiday and why?" "How will this class help you?" "If someone gave you a thousand dollars, how would you spend it?" In the second segment of the lesson, we introduce the sound - symbol relationship. We introduce a letter while writing it in the air: kinesthetic movement. If the students need instruction in writing the letter, we also do the writing procedure. Most early readers print; therefore, we teach them cursive writing. The left to right directionality of cursive makes it easier to write neatly, helps fluency, increases speed in writing, and gives our students the skill that most adults have: writing in cursive, which we expect our students to do also.

In the writing procedure, we write the letter on the board, using three lines — a head line; a belt, or middle, line; and a foot line — while communicating to the students exactly how the letter is made and that some letters are tall and go to the head line, some fall below the foot line, and some are crossed or dotted. We then make the letter in the air, while explaining exactly how to make it. Next, the students make the letter in the air, very large, using their pointers and index fingers as their writing tools.

### Typical Lesson Plan Components

- Using oral language skills
- Learning a sound-symbol relationship, and using cards to review the sound-symbol relationship
- Decoding
- Vocabulary enrichment
- Phrase reading
- Structured reading
- Story reading using comprehension skills

After making the letter in the air, each student receives a 12 X 18 inch sheet of newsprint, which has been folded to create lines. We write a cursive letter in crayon on this newsprint. Now the students can trace the letter with their fingers, "feeling" it and saying it. We trace the letter at least three times with our fingers, three times with the blunt end of a pencil from which the eraser has been removed, and three times with the pencil point. Learners then move on to the next box on the paper, tracing with no crayon letter as a guide, using their fingers, then the blunt end of the pencil, and then the pencil point. Then on to the next box using the same procedure. This is the Slingerland technique used for teaching writing. It involves seeing, saying, feeling, and doing simultaneously. We repeat it every day for every lesson.

After saying the name of the letter and writing the letter in the air, we show the class a picture of a key word beginning with that letter, such as turtle for /t/. Next, the sound of /t/ is made as it is heard in the key word



turtle. After the instructor demonstrates the procedure, the class follows the procedure as a group, then each student does it. "Write the letter in the air, say the keyword, say the sound of the letter." They have felt the letter, spoken the letter, heard the name of the letter and letter sound, and said the letter sound.

After we have introduced the sound-symbol relationship for a specific number of letters, we review this sound-symbol relationship by displaying flash cards of the letters. This is a review with emphasis on both enabling the learners to feel success and allowing the teacher to ascertain whether everyone has learned the relationship. The students write the letter in the air, speak the name of the letter, hear the name of the letter and the sound of the letter, and then say the sound of the letter. Every lesson has a review of letters using this sound-symbol relationship.

**The third lesson** segment involves the decoding of words. We decode, or sound out, a list of words every day. We develop these lists by using words that incorporate the sounds taught in the second segment of the lesson. We do not include words that contain sounds that we have not taught. So, for example, if we have only taught the sounds for short /i/, consonants /t/, /n/, /p/, then we can spell or decode only words containing those sounds, such as tip, nip, nit, it, tin, pin. To encourage students to sound out words rather than memorize or sight read them, we often use nonsense words such as "nin," or "ip." The more vowel and consonant sounds the students learn, the more words we can use. We begin with one-syllable words, progress to two syllables, three syllables, and so forth. We usually decode 20 to 25 words in a lesson, of which one-third are nonsense. To decode a word, the student underlines the vowels, divides the word into syllables, shows what each vowel "says" by writing above each vowel a diacritical mark, pronounces the word, and then defines it. We teach this entire procedure, one step at a time, with each step modeled by the teacher.

**The fourth segment**, after we decode several words, is learning vocabulary. From conversing with our students, and from answering their questions about words, we know that many of them have limited vocabulary skills. When introducing a story, we teach the definitions of new words and the learners put them into sentences. One of the reading series that we use with low-level readers is *Early Reading Comprehension in Varied Subject Matter*

(Ervin, 1999), which has four levels. Written for the older elementary school child, the series seems to be successful with adults. New vocabulary in this story includes "shrubs," "snug," and "den." We also use the Kim Marshall (1999) series for readers above the fourth grade level, which is targeted for adults. Newspapers or *Reader's Digest* are other sources of informational stories. Our students tend to find nonfiction more interesting than fiction.

**The fifth lesson segment** is phrase reading, or reading by ideas. We put five to eight phrases on a chart, read a phrase, and the students repeat it. All phrases are read once with the teacher modeling and the students repeating. After that, the students and instructor discuss any new vocabulary, hyphenated words, or grammar. Then a student approaches the chart at the front of the classroom. We say a phrase, the student underlines the phrase with a yard stick, reads it aloud, and the other students repeat the phrase. All the phrases on the chart are read a second time using this procedure. Then a different student comes to the chart and we pose questions formatted as "Find the phrase that . ." The student finds the phrase that answers the question, underlines it, and reads it aloud. The other students read the phrase aloud. We do all the phrases in the same way. A fourth student comes to the chart. That student begins at the bottom phrase, reads it, and the other students repeat it. The student at the chart reads from the bottom to the top of the chart, focusing on comprehension. During this phase, we build comprehension skills, lengthen eye-span, make functional use of word attack skills, make predictions, and build cognitive skills.

Procedure for  
Phrase Reading

The teacher puts the following on a chart:

*a very lazy cat  
in the shrubs  
cold and snowy  
He would moan  
and eat them*

The teacher might ask the learners to:

*"Find the phrase that tells where"*

*"Find the phrase that has a word that means the opposite of warm"*

*"Find the phrase that begins with an article"*

*"Find the phrase that is the beginning of a sentence"*

*"Find the phrase that begins with a conjunction"*

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*Taken from Early Reading Comprehension, Book A, "The Lazy Cat" Paragraph 1, by J. Ervin.*

The sixth segment, after phrase reading, is structured reading. The first paragraph of the story is read aloud using structured reading: a student reads a certain number of words (a phrase) specified by the teacher. The phrase may answer a where, what, why, how, or when question. We say to one student: "Read the first three words that tell why." The student reads the first three words. We ask another student to: "Read the next four words that tell who." The student reads the next four words. We choose another student: "Read the next two words that tell where." The student reads the next two words. This phrase reading is done throughout the first sentence. When the first sentence is finished, we pick a student to read the entire sentence using phrasing. The objective is to get students to read by ideas or thoughts, not by words.

Each sentence is read in sequence using the same method. Eventually, the first paragraph — and only that paragraph — is read using phrase reading designed by the teacher.

| Structured Reading   |   |
|--|---|
| Students read directly from the book using the phrases the instructor indicates to them:   |   |
| <p>Toby was a wild cat who lived in a city park. He was a very lazy cat. He also liked to eat. Even when it was cold and snowy, he knew how to get his meals without ever leaving where he slept. He would stay in his snug den in the shrubs.</p> |   |
| Instructor says:   | Read the first five words that tell who.                        |
| Student 1 says:  | Toby was a wild cat   |
| Instructor says:   | Read the next two words telling what.                           |
| Student 2 says:  | who lived.  |
| Instructor says:   | Read the next four words that tell where.                       |
| Student 3 says:  | in a city park.   |
| Instructor says:   | Read the complete sentence using that same phrasing.            |
| Student 4 says:  | Toby was a wild cat (pause) who lived (pause) in the city park. |
| Instructor says:   | Read the next two words that tell you what.                     |

The procedure continues until the end of the paragraph. To conclude, a student reads the entire paragraph using good phrasing.

*Taken from Early Reading Comprehension, Book A, "The Lazy Cat" Paragraph 1, by J. Ervin.*

In lesson segment seven, each student gets a turn to read orally. Each student reads aloud a different paragraph in the story. This enables us to hear the learners' decoding, expression, and fluency. We discuss every paragraph, always pressing for good comprehension. After answering some specific questions about the last one or two paragraphs, the learners read them silently. Then the class discusses the last two paragraphs and someone reads them aloud.

### **Challenges**

Finding appropriate reading materials for adult students reading at a low level is extremely difficult. Several publishers print books at a fourth-grade reading level and above; materials for adults reading at lower reading levels lower are scarce. Another major challenge is time. Every day we struggle to include all seven steps in our 90-minute class. We may modify the lesson by making steps shorter, decoding fewer words, or reading half the story and assigning the rest for homework, but we do not continue the lesson the next day. Repetition of the seven-step sequence provides useful structure, freeing learners to focus on content rather than methodology.

### **Results**

Since I have started using this multisensory approach, I have witnessed success. During the winter and spring 2000 instructional sessions, for example, our learners improved their skills in word reading and word attack at a statistically significant level as measured by the WRAT3 (word reading) and the Woodcock Johnson-Revised (word attack) tests. But more than statistics, the successes come from the students. They are now willing to pick up a newspaper and they can laugh and joke about their reading, because they have experienced some success. They tell us that the structure and continuity of the instruction as well as the interactive teaching methods were particularly helpful. They have discovered that they are not the only

people in the world with reading difficulties and know that, with time and diligence, they can achieve their educational goals.

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#### About the Author

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# *ABE NetNews*

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Welcome to the fourth edition of *ABE NetNews* written by LDA Learning Center and funded through an ABE Supplemental Grant. In each issue we feature a different topic related to Adult Basic Education and the challenges faced teaching adult learners. This issue's feature topic is *Interventions for Adult Learners with Learning Disabilities and Depression*. In addition, we will discuss techniques to enhance reading comprehension. Our goal in providing this information is to give you useful, proven strategies for working with adults who have learning disabilities or learning difficulties.

## **Interventions for Adults Learners with Learning Disabilities and Depression**

Instructors are typically trained to work with learners that have average skills. Many are trained to work with slow learners, gifted learners, and learners who lack discipline. However, most instructors are not well prepared to work with learners who have depression and/or mental health issues. Research suggests that teaching "self-esteem" in the classroom is a positive way to support these individuals. The following strategies are useful in helping learners improve their self-esteem and become more confident both academically and socially:

- **Set a Warm, Supportive Tone in the Classroom**

Instructors cannot *give* learners self-esteem. They can, however, create a climate that nurtures it. This environment provides an accepting atmosphere in which learners feel valued, supported, and free to take risks. It is important that instructors show respect for all learners. Learners need to know that mistakes are a normal and expected part of the learning process. Encourage learners to compliment their peers and to laugh at themselves. Never allow them to make fun of or put others down.

- **Consider the Impact of Your Actions and Comments on Your Learners**

An instructor's potential impact on a learner is immeasurable. Even the smallest actions and comments have the ability to lift up a learner or send him/her into a deeper downward spiral. Make a conscience effort to be aware of the impact you have on your learners' self-esteem in the classroom. It is also important that instructors avoid using language that the learner may think or feel is belittling or criticizing, especially in front of peers.

- **Offer Praise That Is Specific and Genuine**

Specific praise conveys true appreciation for a learner's work more so than vague, nonspecific compliments. Let them know exactly what you like about their work or behavior. Praise them for small steps as well as big. Keep in mind that some learners may not like to be praised in front of others.

- **Avoid False Praise**

Many learners see through false or empty praise. Vague, general words of praise may mean little, sound phony, and feel manipulative. Learners may dismiss your compliments and tune out the words of support.

- **Help the Learner Gain a Realistic Understanding of His or Her Strengths and Weaknesses**

Learners with low self-esteem tend to focus on their failures and dismiss their successes. Have them make a list of all their strengths. Make sure to add things they may have overlooked. Also, talk about a few of their weaknesses, noting that everyone has weaknesses. Express optimism that hard work will improve these areas.

- **Replace Negative Self-Talk with Positive Self-Talk**

The internal language of a learner with low self-esteem is often negative. Most of the public statements they make reflect their private thoughts. Try to counter the negative self-talk by gently exposing their misperceptions and offering a more positive and realistic view of their abilities. Give learners feedback that they may turn into positive self-talk. For example: When learners are frustrated they might say, "I'm stupid. I'm never going to get this." Tell them you hear their frustration and that you believe they really can do it. Remind them of a skill they have now mastered that once frustrated them. Tell them how their persistence and hard work paid off then and will pay off again.

- **Challenge the Learner**

True self-esteem comes from earning it. Provide the learner with work that engages their mind and stretches their abilities; however, be sure it is still within their ability so that they can experience success (*Success builds success!*). Make sure that the learner completes the work even if prompting and extra time is needed.

- **Showcase the Learner's Strengths**

Find opportunities to highlight the learner's accomplishments. Talk with the learner about their skills and successful activities in other areas of life.

- **Create Opportunities for the Learner to Feel Important**

Providing service to others is often a valuable way of fostering self-esteem. There may be other people in the classroom having problems that the learner has successfully dealt with.

- **Give Special Attention to the Learner's Interests**

Find a few minutes every day to talk with the learner about his or her interests and concerns. Some days it may be necessary to put off an academic lesson if the learner needs to talk.



- **Encourage Involvement**

Learners with low self-esteem are often withdrawn or isolated from others. Find ways to integrate the learner into activities either in or out of school, such as parenting support groups. Orchestrate the activities so that learners are likely to meet with success and become involved with positive individuals.

- **Help the Learner Cope With Failure**

The role of the instructor is not simply to show the learner how to minimize difficulty, but also how to constructively cope with it. Teach them that failure is all part of learning and that most successes do not come without some setbacks.

- **Encourage Other Instructors to Bolster the Learner's Confidence**

Talk with other instructors in your program. Ask them to find ways to make the learner feel important. Often being recognized by other instructors is enough to make a learner feel welcomed and valued.

Individuals with depression need a safe and supportive environment. An instructor may feel helpless dealing with depression in the classroom. It is important that the instructor educate him or herself in this area and become familiar with the symptoms. Whether you are dealing with a child, adolescent, or adult, depression can be a very serious disease. To deal specifically with the illness of depression, the following suggestions can be helpful in the classroom:

- **Don't ignore a learner with depression.** Ignoring tends to show the learner that you don't care and provides the learner with another reason to give up.
- **Try to draw out the learner in class discussions.** Do whatever it takes to stimulate their minds so that they don't withdraw and ignore you.
- **Let them know that you care.** Help them to catch up on late work. Set up extra tutoring with a positive role model.
- **Never give up on the learner regardless of how long they have resisted putting forth effort in your class.** Learners can tell when an instructor no longer believes in them and expects them to fail. It typically makes the situation worse.
- **Don't make the learner feel that they have a time limit in which to get over the depression.** Everyone deals with depression in a different time frame.
- **Don't lie to the learner.** Don't make promises about confidentiality that you cannot keep. Know what your school's policies and the law require you to do.
- **Be sincere.** Learners can detect insincerity on your part. If detected, it will cause them further pain. If you feel you are unable to help them, find someone who can.

Barb Geisel, LDA Learning Center

If you suspect that you are working with an adult with undiagnosed depression, first of all, take it seriously. Talk to them about their feelings and how they are coping with their challenges. Secondly, offer the number and web address of United Way's **FIRST CALL FOR HELP** (651) 291-0211 <http://www.uwmisp.org/mpis/>.

## Enhancing Reading Comprehension in Adult Learners

Inadequate reading comprehension is an issue facing many adults with learning disabilities. Sometimes it is a matter of not understanding the vocabulary; but often it is a matter of not being taught how to get the most information from reading materials. The following method can be taught to students. Although reading for comprehension is definitely “work”, the payoff will be worth the effort.

### THE SQ3R METHOD (Survey, Question, Read, Recite, and Review)

The SQ3R method is a strategy to enhance reading comprehension. The SQ3R method leads the learner to discover the important facts and ideas that are contained in an assignment. Using this method also helps show learners how they can best master and retain the knowledge.

**Survey:** *Take only a minute or two to preview the entire assignment and find out what it is about as a whole. Read summaries, section headings and subheadings, captions under pictures, and pull quotes.* Comprehension begins with preparing to receive new information. The new information will be associated with information the learner already has. Think of the brain as a room full of file cabinets. The Survey step helps by identifying the appropriate file cabinet, cabinet drawer, and file folder. New information is more meaningful when associated with information the learner already has stored.

**Question:** *Ask yourself questions based on your Survey of the text. For example, use a boldface heading like "Types of Rocks" in reading about Geology and turn it into a question such as, "What are the types of rocks?"* The questions are generated from the learner's quick preview during the Survey step. It is best if questions are written down. A good list of questions prepares the mind to actively seek answers during reading.

**Read:** *Read the material actively attempting to answer your questions and to organize the material. Read only to the end of each headed section.* Remind learners to read one section at a time. Highlighting or underlining is appropriate at this time also. Highlight or underline only after reading the section and after asking, “What is the most important information contained in this section?” It is recommended that learners limit highlighting or underlining to 10% or less of the text. Making notes in the margins or writing additional questions is also appropriate at this time.

**Recite:** *Look away from the assignment and from any notes you have taken and ask yourself the questions you have already made up. If you cannot answer your questions without looking back at the material, you should reread and then try again.* In addition to answering the questions generated earlier, learners may simply paraphrase what they've read. If this seems too difficult, limit the activity by having them say one thing they've learned from the reading. This skill can be built up over time. Have learners summarize the information to the instructor or to another person.

**Review:** *Briefly review each major section as you complete it. Review again later on the same day to keep from forgetting the material. Your understanding of it will be increased each time you review. Go back over the material several times, if possible. Typically up to 90% of what is read is forgotten if not reviewed within 24 hours. Encourage learners to review immediately after learning and then repeatedly on a daily and weekly basis. If highlighting is done appropriately, a review of the highlighted material (and margin notes) should be sufficient.*

## Asking Comprehension Questions

It is helpful when instructors are aware of the wide range of comprehension questions that can be asked to a learner. The following list is a sample of the many types of comprehension questions that can be asked during a reading session.

- **Locating information or facts**
  - *Where in the passage does it talk about \_\_\_\_?*
  - *Find the capital of Alabama.*
- **Stating the main idea**
  - *In one sentence, summarize what you just read.*
  - *Which of the following best tells the main idea of this passage? (Offer 2-3 choices.)*
- **Drawing conclusions or making inferences from the material**
  - *How do you think the main character feels after hearing the news?*
  - *What do you think is the lesson here?*
- **Determining the sequence**
  - *List the order of events. In this story, what happened first, next, and last?*
  - *Draw 3-4 pictures that represent the story line and arrange them in order.*
- **Personalizing the information**
  - *How would you feel in this situation?*
  - *What would you do and why?*

Recommended materials: Barnell Loft *Specific Skills Series*. Barnell Loft, LTD, Baldwin, New York  
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## **“Best Practices” for Improving Reading Comprehension**

Swanson (2001) conducted an extensive investigation of teaching strategies for improving reading comprehension. The following sequence of events represents a “common instruction core” and was determined to contribute most significantly to improving reading comprehension.

1. State the learning objectives and orient the students to what they will be learning and what performance will be expected of them.
2. Review the skills necessary to understand the concept.
3. Present the information, give examples, and demonstrate the concepts/materials.
4. Pose questions (probes) to students and assess their level of understanding and correct misconceptions.
5. Provide group instruction and independent practice. Give students an opportunity to demonstrate new skills and learn the new information on their own.
6. Assess performance and provide feedback. Review the independent work and give a quiz. Give feedback for correct answers and reteach skills if answers are incorrect.
7. Provide regular practice and review.

(Swanson, H. L. *Reading intervention research outcomes and students with learning disabilities*. Perspectives. The International Dyslexia Association. Vol. 27, No. 2. Spring, 2001)

## Reading for Pleasure

*Learners' personal reading choices can provide teachers with ideas on how to motivate and support them*

by Sondra Cuban

*After tutoring, teaching, and doing research in literacy programs, I wanted to know more about how literacy fit into women's lives, thinking that this could help me understand how better to serve women learners in programs. I conducted a lengthy qualitative study of 10 women learners for my doctoral dissertation. I wanted to find out if the women learners I was studying read outside of the program, what they wanted to read about, and what their purposes were for reading. I focus here on my interviews with four women and what their experiences suggest for curriculum and instruction in literacy programs.*

Gloria, Donna, Lourdes, and Elizabeth were enrolled in a computer-assisted literacy program in a semirural area of Hawaii. Gloria and Donna were beginning adult basic education (ABE) students; Lourdes and Elizabeth, both students of English for speakers of other languages (ESOL), were at slightly higher levels in the program. Donna was at the lowest level of literacy of the four women and rarely read. She told me she really wanted to read love stories but felt she couldn't. She said, "I guess my mind's so tired that I get frustrated and give up. I guess, like I said — too much stuff going [on] in my mind." Her desire to read love stories was fueled by the romances and comedies she watched on TV, which she enjoyed and which distracted her from her family problems.

The women in the study all read and wanted to read popular - culture materials — commercially published books also referred to as genre and trade books — that were not, for the most part, used in the literacy program they attended. They also used reading for similar ends: they read to make themselves feel better. I interviewed the women over the course of a year about their schooling and work experiences, the ways they learned in their families of origin, and about their use of mass media: anything from watching television to reading books. I also observed them and interviewed staff in the program within this period. I discovered gaps between what the women read and wanted to read outside of the program and what the program offered.

In the literacy program, they learned basic keyboarding skills, English grammar, phonics, and oral pronunciation. Instruction in the program tended towards skills-based learning from commercial texts such as student dictionaries, Laubach books such as the *Challenger* series, reading skills workbooks such as the Steck-Vaughn *Reading for Today* series, as well as pre-GED materials. The program also used educational and diagnostic software and typing program tutorials. Library books and newspapers were sometimes brought into the tutoring instruction but were not central to the curriculum.

### The Research

Each woman participated in five interviews between August, 1997, and May, 1998. Four of the interviews lasted between one and two hours and concerned the women's literacy and learning in school, their work, families, and social networks, as well as their use of mass media. The biographical interview was shorter and valuable for obtaining background information.

Gloria, Lourdes, and Elizabeth did read outside of the literacy program, and although I did not ask them how much they read or venture into the technical aspects of their reading, they described memorable reading experiences and the effects the books had on them. They read mainly for pleasure and to reduce tension, reading stories that nurtured them emotionally. The reading materials they referred to in the interviews would, by most standards, be considered too difficult for the learning level in which the program placed them. Lourdes, for example, was at an ESOL level of competency 2 (between grades 4.5 and 6.5). She described what she learned from reading Gail Sheehy's *The Silent Passage*, a book that deeply affected her. Lourdes also said she read the Bible and small prayer books. She read these books regularly, and as needed, sometimes on a daily basis.

### Elizabeth

Elizabeth, a 70-year-old naturalized Japanese woman, was a meat wrapper for most of her working years. She confided in me with both excitement and shame that she had gotten hooked on soap operas through a friend, even videotaping them while she was away. She told me about the character development in these shows and that an advantage to watching them was

that they helped her learn standard English. She also read books that had romantic storylines.

Reading and eating in conjunction with TV watching were important and ritualized for Elizabeth, who also read Japanese novels. Elizabeth explained how she read when she was younger, "every day because I'm home alone so breakfast, lunch, dinner, I have a book stand in the center. I have the book there while I'm eating — I read books." She read trade books, for example, *The Joy Luck Club*, by Amy Tan, which helped with her English vocabulary and was stimulating to her. She also listened to tapes of this book. Her family members and acquaintances were uninformed about the intense pain a serious back problem gave her. So, turning to books and going to classes seemed like a smart move. "I have lots of pain. [Be] cause I don't complain... I'm not expecting that person always feels sorry for you," she said.

#### Gloria

Gloria, a Hawaiian woman in her early 50s who spent her younger years working on macadamia farms and in pineapple factories, was worried about being able to pay her rent due to welfare cuts. She explained, "and, you know, like welfare — even though you know you're true [being honest], they don't know, they just give you hard time." She read the Bible every day and related to it as "a love letter" and a source of wisdom. She also listened to Bible tapes, used Bible software, discussed the Bible with her pastor and his wife, and used biblical resources to teach children in Sunday school. These activities invigorated her and distracted her from her worries. When she felt trapped by the welfare system, she sought spiritual materials for the direction and comfort they provided.

"The book. It's more intimate [than the computerized version of the Bible]... because that is more like a study tool. And then when you're reading, this is what the pastor said, when you're reading, it's like a love letter. Like somebody wrote to you and say how much he loves you. So the Bible is actually a love letter and he telling you what's taking place in the world."

## Lourdes

Lourdes, a naturalized Mexican mother who used to sew aloha shirts and grade papaya, was in her 50s. Now a health aide, she was married to a local man. When facing problems with co-workers and her husband, Lourdes read her prayer book and inspirational books. She also watched a nun on television every night to relax and to seek encouragement. Oprah Winfrey and her guests, many of whom were authors, inspired her, and inspirational books gave her a sense of hope. This and other popular-culture books she read helped her to feel independent. As she described it, "The first book I read — I'll never forget it. Was back in 19..., maybe 1981, was with Norman Vincent Peale, the positive thinker. Oh that book was good. So from then on I start you know, in my head I can do it. They interest me to go back to work and to be indep[endent]... you know what I am now. Not to listen to my husband too much..."

She carried books in her purse and consulted them when she had "the blues." She learned to use them as a shield from pain, using them for comfort: "...I have another one [a book], pick-me-up-prayers. Pick me up. And it's, like, if I do a lot of those things for somebody, then something goes wrong, and I remember what that book says... So these little books help me a lot. Oh, it make me feel good because you know that God is here."

## The Theory

Cultural theories of reading for pleasure, including reading response theory (see Storey, 1993; Simonds, 1992; Radway, 1991; Fiske, 1989; Modleski, 1982), focus on the psychological benefits readers receive from reading mass-produced materials, otherwise called "popular texts." Pleasure reading is pleasurable because it can bring out the "melodramatic imagination" of women readers (Storey, p. 141). It provides "a terrain on which to dream" (Storey, p. 148) with fantasies that both reflect and counter "the very real problems and tensions in women's lives" (Modleski, 1982, p. 14).

"Popular culture texts" or "genre literature" (self-help books, mysteries, romance novels, Christian literature, even the Bible) may be favored by casual readers over other "classical" literature (i.e., "great books") because they make readers feel comfortable and less intimidated. They seem familiar



messages from the media that are open for interpretations. John Fiske refers to these texts as "producerly" (p.103) because the story lines do not follow strict rules and they contain many "loose ends" and "gaps" that seduce readers to fill them in and produce new meanings. These meanings are themselves relevant to readers' lives, feelings, and cultures. This process is possible because the texts are open and accessible. Readers identify with strong and weak characters because the characters act out their problems in ways that readers understand and desire. The readers can imagine themselves as treasured heroines and feel emotionally strong.

Janice Radway (1991) studied 42 women romance readers, many of whom had some college education. She learned that the women often read romances when they were under stress and depressed or just to relax: it had tranquilizing effects. Reading these stories allowed them to unwind and focus on their "personal needs, desires and pleasures." (p. 61). It also fulfilled their fantasies of being cared for by another person. The women knowingly read and reread the formulaic accounts for a desired emotional experience, in part, as a "reversal of the oppression and emotional abandonment suffered by women in real life" (p. 55).

Reader-response theory offers another way to understand the role of reading in women's lives by asking not only about the meanings women receive from texts but also the feelings they bring to reading. Reader-response theory provides an approach for understanding and building on students' reading interests and their imaginations.

Other research demonstrates how pleasure reading can be used effectively in the classroom. Cho and Krashen's study (1994) found that women studying English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) who read romance novels (the Sweet Valley series) felt that this reading increased their vocabularies and their interest in reading as it helped them learn English. A practitioner-researcher, Donna Earl, reported that students in a literacy program read more outside when she focused on increasing their outside reading practices. She felt that providing learners with high-interest, easy-to-read materials is one factor in enabling learners to "learn to love reading" (1997, p. 1).

## Reading Comprehension

Several factors influence the comprehension accuracy when a student reads a selection:

- a. background and experience
- b. interest and motivation for reading
- c. physical, mental, and emotional state
- d. attitude and confidence
- e. lack of understanding that the type of reading required -  
appreciational, critical, or information - affects the rate of reading
- f. difficulty in word recognition
- g. language patterns and styles
- h. difficulty in interpreting abstractions.
- i. physical environment such as noise level, lighting, and temperature.

Brigance

## Classification

Body parts  
Things to see, hear, feel, smell, taste  
Action words  
Clothes  
Furniture  
Buildings  
People  
Cooking Utensils  
Fruits  
Vegetables  
Sports  
Toys  
Colors  
Shapes  
Plants  
Insects  
Birds  
Animals  
Transportation  
Tools  
Occupations  
Things in city, things on farm  
Weather

## Concepts

### Quantity & Number

some  
few  
many  
most  
several  
every  
half  
whole  
about

### Miscellaneous

different  
alike  
other  
match  
pair  
skip  
with

### Space

up  
down  
on  
in  
out  
at  
by  
above  
below  
from  
between  
near  
far  
under  
over  
top  
bottom  
behind  
in front of  
right  
left  
next to  
row  
center  
middle  
beginning  
through  
around  
away

### Time

before  
after  
early  
late  
always  
never  
often  
sometimes  
until

### Size

big  
little  
tall  
short  
fat  
thin  
long  
small  
wide  
narrow

## Analogies

Fire is hot. \_\_\_\_\_ is cold.  
Sugar is sweet. \_\_\_\_\_ is sour.  
Elephants are big. \_\_\_\_\_ are little.  
Bricks are heavy. \_\_\_\_\_ are light.  
Day is light. \_\_\_\_\_ is dark.  
Tommy is a boy. \_\_\_\_\_ is a girl.  
Father is a man. \_\_\_\_\_ is a woman.  
Hands have fingers. \_\_\_\_\_ have toes.  
Gloves are for hands. \_\_\_\_\_ are for feet.  
Ships travel on water. \_\_\_\_\_ travel on land.

Bracelet is to arm; as ring is to \_\_\_\_\_. (finger)  
Watch is to wrist; as hat is to \_\_\_\_\_. (head)  
Knee is to leg; as elbow is to \_\_\_\_\_. (arm)  
Coffee is to cup; as coke is to \_\_\_\_\_. (bottle)  
Happy is to laugh; as sad is to \_\_\_\_\_. (cry)  
Hammer is to nail; as screwdriver is to \_\_\_\_\_. (screw)  
Wood is to saw; as paper is to \_\_\_\_\_. (scissors)  
Rake is to leaves; as comb is to \_\_\_\_\_. (hair)  
Stove is to hot; as refrigerator is to \_\_\_\_\_. (cold)  
Knife is to cut; as shovel is to \_\_\_\_\_. (dig)  
Rug is to floor; as blanket is to \_\_\_\_\_. (bed)  
Soap is to hands; as toothpaste is to \_\_\_\_\_. (teeth)

Trains go with tracks; as trucks go with \_\_\_\_\_. (roads)  
Airplanes go with sky; as ships go with \_\_\_\_\_. (water)  
Rockets go with up; as submarines go with \_\_\_\_\_. (down)  
Car goes with driver; as airplane goes with \_\_\_\_\_. (pilot)  
Two goes with bicycle; as three goes with \_\_\_\_\_. (tricycle)  
Pencil goes with paper; as chalk goes with \_\_\_\_\_. (chalkboard)  
Ceiling goes with up; as floor goes with \_\_\_\_\_. (down)  
Children go with house; as birds go with \_\_\_\_\_. (nest)  
Bricks go with buildings; as glass goes with \_\_\_\_\_. (windows)  
Beef goes with cows; as pork goes with \_\_\_\_\_. (pork)  
Bread goes with toast; as wheat goes with \_\_\_\_\_. (flour)

Homonyms

|                  |                |                  |                |               |
|------------------|----------------|------------------|----------------|---------------|
| ant<br>aunt      | our<br>hour    | to<br>too<br>two | some<br>sum    | know<br>no    |
| through<br>threw | right<br>write | their<br>there   | new<br>knew    | buy<br>by     |
| ate<br>eight     | one<br>won     | hear<br>here     | see<br>sea     | due<br>dew    |
| knot<br>not      | sail<br>sale   | rap<br>wrap      | maid<br>made   | ring<br>wring |
| I<br>eye         | lie<br>lye     | road<br>rode     | read<br>reed   | tail<br>tale  |
| meat<br>meet     | week<br>weak   | way<br>weigh     | hair<br>hare   | would<br>wood |
| night<br>knight  | beat<br>beet   | sun<br>son       | whole<br>hole  | so<br>sew     |
| fair<br>fare     | dear<br>deer   | mail<br>male     | steel<br>steal |               |

## Synonyms

absent (away, gone)

spy (see, look, sneak,  
agent, detective)

tiny (little, small, wee)

large (big, huge, gigantic)

peaceful (calm, quiet)

tired (sleepy, weary)

afraid (scared, frightened,  
fearful)

tidy (neat, clean)

angry (cross)

odd (strange)

lift (raise)

noise (sound, racket)

fast (quick, rapid)

cry (weep)

hunt (seek)

package (bundle)

dish (plate, bowl, saucer)

carpet (rug, mat)

beautiful (pretty, lovely)

make-believe (pretend, imagine)

forest (trees, woods)

wicked (bad, nasty, mean,  
awful, evil)

damp (wet, moist)

ill (sick, ailing)

cold (chilly, icy)

sofa (couch)

odd (queer, unusual)

tear (rip)

crooked (uneven)

shake (quiver, tremble)

change (alter, vary)

# Merriam-Webster Dictionary

## Pronunciation Key

|                                 |                         |                         |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| \&\ as a and u in<br>abut       | \e\ as e in<br>bet      | \o\ as aw in<br>law     |
| \[^&]\ as e in<br>kitten        | \E\ as ea in<br>easy    | \oi\ as oy in<br>boy    |
| \&r\ as ur and er<br>in further | \g\ as g in<br>go       | \th\ as th in<br>thin   |
| \a\ as a in ash                 | \i\ as i in hit         | \[th_]\ as              |
| \A\ as a in ace                 | \I\ as i in<br>ice      | th in the               |
| \ä\ as o in mop                 | \ü\ as oo in<br>loot    |                         |
| \au\ as ou in out               | \j\ as j in<br>job      |                         |
| \ch\ as ch in chin              | \u\ as oo in<br>foot    |                         |
|                                 | \[ng]\ as ng<br>in sing | \y\ as y in<br>yet      |
|                                 | \O\ as o in<br>go       | \zh\ as si in<br>vision |



# **Bloom's Taxonomy**

### Bloom's Taxonomy

Benjamin Bloom created this taxonomy for categorizing level of abstraction of questions that commonly occur in educational settings. The taxonomy provides a useful structure in which to categorize questions. Ask questions within particular levels,

| Competence           | Skills Demonstrated  |
|----------------------|--|
| <b>Knowledge</b>     | Observation and recall of information<br>Knowledge of dates, events, places<br>Knowledge of major ideas<br>Mastery of subject matter<br><b>Question Cues:</b> list, define, tell, describe, identify, show, label, collect, examine, tabulate, quote, name, who, when, where, etc.   |
| <b>Comprehension</b> | Understanding information<br>Grasp meaning<br>Translate knowledge into new context<br>Interpret facts, compare, contrast<br>Order, group, infer causes<br>Predict consequences<br><b>Questions Cues:</b> summarize, describe, interpret, contrast, predict, associate, distinguish, estimate, differentiate, discuss, extend                             |
| <b>Application</b>   | Use information<br>Use methods, concepts, theories in new situations<br>Solve problems using required skills or knowledge<br><b>Questions Cues:</b> apply, demonstrate, calculate, complete, illustrate, show, solve, examine, modify, relate, change, classify, experiment, discover  |
| <b>Analysis</b>      | Seeing patterns<br>Organization of parts<br>Recognition of hidden meanings<br>Identification of components<br><b>Question Cues:</b> analyze, separate, order, explain, connect, classify, arrange, divide, compare, select, explain, infer   |
| <b>Synthesis</b>     | Use old ideas to create new ones<br>Generalize from given facts<br>Relate knowledge from several areas<br>Predict, draw conclusions<br><b>Question Cues:</b> combine, integrate, modify, rearrange, substitute, plan, create, design, invent, what if?, compose, formulate, prepare, generalize, rewrite   |
| <b>Evaluation</b>    | Compare and discriminate between ideas<br>Assess value of theories, presentations<br>Make choices based on reasoned argument<br>Verify value of evidence<br>Recognize subjectivity<br><b>Question Cues:</b> assess, decide, rank, grade, test, measure, recommend, convince, select, judge, explain, discriminate, support, conclude, compare, summarize |

## BLOOM'S TAXONOMY

### SOME POSSIBLE VERBS FOR USE IN STATING COGNITIVE OUTCOMES

|  | KNOWLEDGE   | COMPREHENSION  | APPLICATION  | ANALYSIS  | SYNTHESIS   | EVALUATION  |
|--|---|--|--|---|---|---|
|  | DEFINE<br>LIST<br>NAME<br>RECALL<br>RECORD<br>RELATE<br>REPAST<br>UNDERLINE | DESCRIBE<br>DISCUSS<br>EXPLAIN<br>EXPRESS<br>IDENTIFY<br>LOCATE<br>RECOGNIZE<br>REPORT<br>RESTATE<br>REVIEW<br>TELL<br>TRANSLATE | APPLY<br>DEMONSTRATE<br>DRAMATISE<br>EMPLOY<br>ILLUSTRATE<br>INTERPRET<br>OPERATE<br>PRACTICE<br>SCHEDULE<br>SHOP<br>SKETCH<br>USE | ANALYZE<br>APPRAISE<br>CALCULATE<br>CATEGORIZE<br>COMPARE<br>CONTRACT<br>CRITICISE<br>DEBATE<br>DIAGRAM<br>DIFFERENTIATE<br>DISTINGUISH<br>EXAMINE<br>EXPERIMENT<br>INSPECT<br>INVENTORY<br>QUESTION<br>RELATE<br>SOLVE<br>TEST | ARRANGE<br>ASSEMBLE<br>COLLECT<br>COMPOSE<br>CONSTRUCT<br>CREATE<br>DESIGN<br>FORMULATE<br>MANAGE<br>ORGANIZE<br>PLAN<br>PREPARE<br>PROPOSE<br>SET UP | APPRAISE<br>ASSESS<br>CHOOSE<br>COMPARE<br>ESTIMATE<br>JUDGE<br>MEASURE<br>RATE<br>REVISE<br>SCORE<br>SELECT<br>VALUE |

BLOOM, B.S. (1956). TAXONOMY OF EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES, BY A COMMITTEE OF COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY EXAMINERS, NY: LONGMANS

How can you use ... ?  
 What examples can you find to ... ?  
 Can you solve \_\_\_\_\_ using what you have learned ... ?  
 How can you organise \_\_\_\_\_ to show ... ?  
 Can you show understanding of ... ?  
 What approach can you use to ... ?  
 Apply your learning to develop... ?  
 What other way can you plan to ... ?  
 What can result if ... ?  
 Can you make use of the facts to ... ?  
 What elements can you choose to change ... ?  
 What facts can you select to show ... ?  
 What questions can be asked in an interview with ... ?

#### Application

Questions for each level..

How can you classify the type of ... ?  
 How can you compare ... ? contrast ... ?  
 Will you state or interpret in your own words ... ?  
 Can you rephrase the meaning ... ?  
 What facts or ideas show ... ?  
 What is the main idea of ... ?  
 Which statements support ... ?  
 Explain what is happening ... what is meant ... ?  
 What can you say about ... ?  
 Which is the best answer ... ?  
 How can you summarise ... ?

#### Comprehension

Classify the parts or features of ... ?  
 How is \_\_\_\_\_ related to ... ?  
 Why do you think ... ?  
 What is the theme ... ?  
 What motive is there ... ?  
 Can you list the parts ... ?  
 What inference can you make ... ?  
 What conclusions can you draw ... ?  
 How can you classify ... ?  
 How can you categorise ... ?  
 Can you identify the difference parts ... ?  
 What evidence can you find ... ?  
 What is the relationship between ... ?  
 Can you make a distinction between ... ?  
 What is the function of ... ?  
 What ideas justify ... ?

#### Analysis

#### Evaluation

Can you make changes to solve ... ?  
 How can you improve ... ?  
 What can happen if ... ?  
 Can you elaborate on the reason ... ?  
 Can you propose an alternative ... ?  
 Can you invent ... ?  
 How can you adapt \_\_\_\_\_ to create a different ... ?  
 Can you change/modify the plot (plan) ... ?  
 What can be done to minimise/maximise?  
 What way can you design ... ?  
 What can you combine to improve/change?  
 Suppose you can \_\_\_\_\_ what can you do ... ?  
 How can you test ... ?  
 Can you formulate a theory for ... ?  
 Can you predict the outcome if ... ?  
 How can you estimate the results for ... ?  
 Construct a model that changes ... ?  
 Can you think of an original way for the ... ?

#### Synthesis

#### Knowledge

Do you agree with the actions ... ? with the outcomes ... ?  
 What is your opinion of ... ?  
 How can you prove ... ? disprove ... ?  
 Can you assess the value or importance of ... ?  
 Can it be better if ... ?  
 Why did they (the character) choose ... ?  
 What can you recommend ... ?  
 How can you rate the ... ?  
 What can you cite to defend the actions ... ?  
 How can you evaluate ... ?  
 How could you determine ... ?  
 What choice can you have made ... ?  
 What can you select ... ?  
 How can you prioritise ... ?  
 What judgement can you make about ... ?  
 Based on what you know, how can you explain ... ?  
 What information can you use to support the view ... ?  
 How can you justify ... ?  
 What data was used to make the conclusion ... ?  
 Why was it better that ... ?  
 How can you prioritise the facts ... ?

What is ... ? How is ... ?  
 Where is ... ? When did \_\_\_\_\_ happen?  
 How did \_\_\_\_\_ happen? How can you explain ... ?  
 Why did ... ? How can you describe ... ?  
 Can you recall ... ?  
 How can you show ... ?  
 Can you select ... ?  
 Who were the main ... ? Can you list three ... ?  
 Which one ... ? Who was ... ?

-ast

-ing

-ock

**Word**

**Patterns**

-ack

-est

-itch

# WORD PATTERNS

## SHORT A SOUNDS

| <b>-ab</b> | <b>-ack</b> | <b>-ad</b> | <b>-ag</b> | <b>-am</b> | <b>-amp</b> | <b>-an</b> | <b>-and</b> | <b>-ang</b> | <b>-ank</b> |
|------------|-------------|------------|------------|------------|-------------|------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| cab        | back        | ad         | bag        | am         | camp        | an         | and         | bang        | bank        |
| dab        | hack        | bad        | gag        | ham        | damp        | ban        | band        | fang        | rank        |
| gab        | jack        | cad        | hag        | jam        | lamp        | can        | hand        | gang        | sank        |
| jab        | pack        | dad        | lag        | clam       | champ       | fan        | land        | hang        | tank        |
| lab        | rack        | fad        | nag        | slam       | clamp       | man        | sand        | rang        | yank        |
| nab        | sack        | had        | rag        | swam       | cramp       | pan        | gland       | sang        | blank       |
| tab        | tack        | lad        | sag        |            | stamp       | ran        | grand       | tang        | clank       |
| blab       | black       | mad        | tag        |            | tramp       | tan        | stand       | clang       | plank       |
| flab       | slack       | pad        | wag        |            |             | van        |             | slang       | crank       |
| slab       | crack       | sad        | brag       |            |             | clan       |             |             | drank       |
| crab       | track       | clad       | drag       |            |             | plan       |             |             | frank       |
| drab       | shack       | glad       | flag       |            |             | scan       |             |             | spank       |
| grab       | whack       | shad       | shag       |            |             | span       |             |             | thank       |
| scab       | smack       |            | snag       |            |             | than       |             |             |             |
| stab       | snack       |            | stag       |            |             |            |             |             |             |
|            | stack       |            |            |            |             |            |             |             |             |

| <b>-ap</b> | <b>-ash</b> | <b>-asp</b> | <b>-ass</b> | <b>-ast</b> | <b>-at</b> | <b>-atch</b> | <b>-ath</b> | <b>-ax</b> |
|------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|------------|--------------|-------------|------------|
| cap        | ash         | asp         | ass         | cast        | at         | catch        | bath        | ax         |
| gap        | bash        | gasp        | bass        | fast        | bat        | hatch        | path        | wax        |
| lap        | cash        | hasp        | lass        | last        | cat        | latch        | wrath       | flax       |
| map        | dash        | rasp        | mass        | mast        | fat        | match        |             |            |
| nap        | gash        | clasp       | pass        | past        | hat        | patch        |             |            |
| rap        | hash        |             | brass       | vast        | mat        | thatch       |             |            |
| sap        | lash        |             | grass       | blast       | pat        |              |             |            |
| tap        | mash        |             | class       |             | rat        |              |             |            |
| chap       | rash        |             | glass       |             | sat        |              |             |            |
| clap       | sash        |             |             |             | vat        |              |             |            |
| flap       | clash       |             |             |             | brat       |              |             |            |
| slap       | crash       |             |             |             | chat       |              |             |            |
| snap       | smash       |             |             |             | flat       |              |             |            |
| trap       | stash       |             |             |             | slat       |              |             |            |
|            | trash       |             |             |             | scat       |              |             |            |
|            |             |             |             |             | that       |              |             |            |

**WORD PATTERNS**—*continued***SHORT E SOUNDS**

| <b>-eck</b> | <b>-ed</b> | <b>-eg</b> | <b>-elf</b> | <b>-ell</b> | <b>-elp</b> | <b>-elt</b> | <b>-em</b> | <b>-en</b> | <b>-end</b> |
|-------------|------------|------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|------------|------------|-------------|
| deck        | bed        | beg        | elf         | bell        | help        | belt        | hem        | den        | end         |
| heck        | fed        | egg        | self        | dell        | yelp        | felt        | them       | hen        | bend        |
| neck        | led        | keg        | shelf       | fell        |             | melt        | stem       | men        | lend        |
| peck        | red        | leg        |             | hell        |             |             |            | pen        | mend        |
| check       | wed        | peg        |             | sell        |             |             |            | ten        | send        |
| speck       | bled       |            |             | tell        |             |             |            | glen       | blend       |
|             | fled       |            |             | well        |             |             |            | then       | spend       |
|             | sled       |            |             | yell        |             |             |            | when       | trend       |
|             | shed       |            |             | quell       |             |             |            |            |             |
|             | sped       |            |             | shell       |             |             |            |            |             |
|             |            |            |             | smell       |             |             |            |            |             |
|             |            |            |             | spell       |             |             |            |            |             |
|             |            |            |             | swell       |             |             |            |            |             |

| <b>-ent</b> | <b>-ept</b> | <b>-ess</b> | <b>-est</b> | <b>-et</b> |
|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|------------|
| bent        | kept        | less        | best        | bet        |
| dent        | wept        | mess        | nest        | get        |
| lent        |             | bless       | pest        | jet        |
| rent        |             | chess       | rest        | let        |
| sent        |             | dress       | test        | met        |
| tent        |             |             | vest        | net        |
| went        |             |             | west        | pet        |
| spent       |             |             | chest       | set        |
|             |             |             | crest       | wet        |
|             |             |             | quest       | yet        |
|             |             |             |             | fret       |

**WORD PATTERNS**—*continued***SHORT I SOUNDS**

| <b>-ib</b> | <b>-ick</b> | <b>-id</b> | <b>-ift</b> | <b>-ig</b> | <b>-ilk</b> | <b>-ill</b> | <b>-im</b> | <b>-in</b> | <b>-inch</b> |
|------------|-------------|------------|-------------|------------|-------------|-------------|------------|------------|--------------|
| bib        | kick        | bid        | gift        | big        | bilk        | bill        | dim        | in         | inch         |
| fib        | lick        | did        | lift        | dig        | milk        | fill        | him        | bin        | cinch        |
| rib        | nick        | hid        | rift        | fig        | silk        | gill        | rim        | din        | pinch        |
| crib       | pick        | kid        | sift        | jig        |             | hill        | skim       | fin        | clinch       |
|            | sick        | lid        | drift       | pig        |             | kill        | slim       | kin        |              |
|            | tick        | rid        | shift       | rig        |             | mill        | swim       | pin        |              |
|            | wick        | grid       | swift       | wig        |             | pill        | trim       | sin        |              |
|            | brick       | skid       |             | brig       |             | rill        | whim       | tin        |              |
|            | trick       | slid       |             | swig       |             | sill        |            | win        |              |
|            | chick       |            |             |            |             | till        |            | chin       |              |
|            | thick       |            |             |            |             | will        |            | shin       |              |
|            | click       |            |             |            |             | chill       |            | thin       |              |
|            | flick       |            |             |            |             | drill       |            | grin       |              |
|            | slick       |            |             |            |             | grill       |            | skin       |              |
|            | quick       |            |             |            |             | quill       |            | spin       |              |
|            | stick       |            |             |            |             | spill       |            | twin       |              |
|            |             |            |             |            |             | skill       |            |            |              |
|            |             |            |             |            |             | still       |            |            |              |

| <b>-ing</b> | <b>-ink</b> | <b>-int</b> | <b>-ip</b> | <b>-ish</b> | <b>-iss</b> | <b>-ist</b> | <b>-it</b> | <b>-itch</b> | <b>-ive</b> |
|-------------|-------------|-------------|------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|------------|--------------|-------------|
| bing        | ink         | hint        | dip        | dish        | hiss        | fist        | it         | itch         | give        |
| ring        | pink        | mint        | hip        | fish        | kiss        | list        | bit        | ditch        | live        |
| sing        | sink        | tint        | lip        | wish        | miss        | mist        | fit        | pitch        |             |
| wing        | wink        | flint       | nip        | swish       | bliss       | twist       | hit        | witch        | <b>-ix</b>  |
| bring       | blink       |             | rip        |             |             |             | kit        | stitch       | fix         |
| fling       | slink       |             | sip        |             |             |             | lit        | switch       | mix         |
| sling       | stink       |             | tip        |             |             |             | pit        |              | six         |
| sting       | think       |             | zip        |             |             |             | sit        |              | twix        |
| swing       |             |             | yip        |             |             |             | wit        |              |             |
| thing       |             |             | chip       |             |             |             | grit       |              |             |
|             |             |             | ship       |             |             |             | mitt       |              |             |
|             |             |             | whip       |             |             |             | quit       |              |             |
|             |             |             | flip       |             |             |             | slit       |              |             |
|             |             |             | slip       |             |             |             | skit       |              |             |
|             |             |             | grip       |             |             |             | spit       |              |             |
|             |             |             | trip       |             |             |             | twit       |              |             |
|             |             |             | quip       |             |             |             |            |              |             |
|             |             |             | skip       |             |             |             |            |              |             |
|             |             |             | snip       |             |             |             |            |              |             |



WORD PATTERNS—*continued*

## SHORT O SOUNDS

| -ob  | -ock  | -od  | -og  | -oll | -on | -ond | -ong   | -ot  | -ox |
|------|-------|------|------|------|-----|------|--------|------|-----|
| cob  | cock  | cod  | bog  | doll | on  | bond | bong   | cot  | ox  |
| fob  | dock  | God  | cog  | loll | don | fond | gong   | dot  | box |
| gob  | hock  | hod  | dog  | moll | non | pond | long   | got  | fox |
| job  | lock  | nod  | fog  |      | yon |      | song   | hot  |     |
| rob  | mock  | pod  | hog  |      |     |      | tong   | not  |     |
| mob  | pock  | rod  | jog  |      |     |      | wrong  | pot  |     |
| sob  | rock  | sod  | log  |      |     |      | strong | rot  |     |
| blob | sock  | clod | clog |      |     |      |        | blot |     |
| slob | tock  | plod | frog |      |     |      |        | clot |     |
| snob | clock | shod | smog |      |     |      |        | plot |     |
|      | flock |      |      |      |     |      |        | slot |     |
|      | crock |      |      |      |     |      |        | shot |     |
|      | frock |      |      |      |     |      |        | spot |     |
|      | shock |      |      |      |     |      |        | tröt |     |
|      | smock |      |      |      |     |      |        |      |     |
|      | stock |      |      |      |     |      |        |      |     |

## WORD PATTERNS—continued

## SHORT U SOUNDS

| <b>-ub</b> | <b>-uck</b> | <b>-ud</b> | <b>-uff</b> | <b>-ug</b> | <b>-ull</b> | <b>-um</b> | <b>-ump</b> | <b>-un</b> | <b>-unch</b> |
|------------|-------------|------------|-------------|------------|-------------|------------|-------------|------------|--------------|
| cub        | buck        | bud        | buff        | bug        | cull        | bum        | bump        | bun        | bunch        |
| dub        | duck        | cud        | cuff        | dug        | dull        | gum        | dump        | fun        | lunch        |
| hub        | luck        | mud        | huff        | hug        | gull        | hum        | hump        | gun        | punch        |
| nub        | muck        | stud       | muff        | jug        | hull        | mum        | jump        | nun        | brunch       |
| pub        | puck        | thud       | puff        | lug        | lull        | rum        | lump        | pun        | crunch       |
| rub        | suck        |            | bluff       | mug        | mull        | sum        | pump        | run        |              |
| sub        | tuck        |            | gruff       | pug        | null        | glum       | clump       | sun        |              |
| tub        | chuck       |            | stuff       | rug        | skull       | slum       | plump       | shun       |              |
| club       | shuck       |            |             | tug        |             | drum       | slump       | spun       |              |
| grub       | cluck       |            |             | chug       |             | scum       | stump       | stun       |              |
| stub       | pluck       |            |             | thug       |             | chum       | thump       |            |              |
|            | stuck       |            |             | plug       |             |            |             |            |              |
|            |             |            |             | slug       |             |            |             |            |              |
|            |             |            |             | smug       |             |            |             |            |              |

| <b>-ung</b> | <b>-unk</b> | <b>-up</b> | <b>-us</b> | <b>-ush</b> | <b>-usk</b> | <b>-ust</b> | <b>-ut</b> | <b>-uzz</b> |
|-------------|-------------|------------|------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|------------|-------------|
| dung        | bunk        | up         | us         | gush        | dusk        | bust        | but        | buzz        |
| hung        | dunk        | cup        | bus        | hush        | husk        | dust        | cut        | fuzz        |
| lung        | hunk        | pup        | plus       | lush        | tusk        | just        | gut        |             |
| rung        | junk        | sup        | thus       | mush        |             | lust        | hut        |             |
| sung        | sunk        |            |            | rush        |             | must        | jut        |             |
| clung       | chunk       |            |            | blush       |             | rust        | nut        |             |
| flung       | drunk       |            |            | flush       |             | crust       | rut        |             |
| stung       | flunk       |            |            | plush       |             |             | shut       |             |
| swung       | skunk       |            |            | slush       |             |             |            |             |
|             |             |            |            | brush       |             |             |            |             |
|             |             |            |            | crush       |             |             |            |             |
|             |             |            |            | shush       |             |             |            |             |

**WORD PATTERNS—continued****LONG A SOUNDS**

| <b>-ace</b> | <b>-ade</b> | <b>-age</b> | <b>-aid</b> | <b>-ail</b> | <b>-aim</b> | <b>-ain</b> | <b>-aint</b> | <b>-ait</b> | <b>-ale</b> |
|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|-------------|
| ace         | fade        | age         | aid         | ail         | aim         | gain        | faint        | bait        | ale         |
| face        | jade        | cage        | laid        | bail        | maim        | main        | paint        | gait        | dale        |
| lace        | lade        | page        | maid        | fail        |             | pain        | saint        | wait        | gale        |
| mace        | made        | rage        | paid        | hail        |             | rain        | quaint       | trait       | hale        |
| pace        | wade        | sage        | raid        | jail        |             | vain        |              |             | kale        |
| race        | blade       | wage        | braid       | mail        |             | brain       |              |             | male        |
| brace       | glade       | stage       |             | nail        |             | drain       |              |             | pale        |
| place       | grade       |             |             | pail        |             | grain       |              |             | sale        |
| space       | trade       |             |             | rail        |             | train       |              |             | tale        |
|             | shade       |             |             | sail        |             | chain       |              |             | vale        |
|             | spade       |             |             | tail        |             | plain       |              |             | scale       |
|             |             |             |             | vail        |             | slain       |              |             | shale       |
|             |             |             |             | wail        |             | stain       |              |             | stale       |
|             |             |             |             | frail       |             |             |              |             | whale       |
|             |             |             |             | quail       |             |             |              |             |             |
|             |             |             |             | snail       |             |             |              |             |             |
|             |             |             |             | trail       |             |             |              |             |             |

| <b>-ame</b> | <b>-ane</b> | <b>-ape</b> | <b>-ase</b> | <b>-aste</b> | <b>-ate</b> | <b>-ave</b> | <b>-ay</b> | <b>-aze</b> | <b>-eigh</b> |
|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|-------------|------------|-------------|--------------|
| came        | cane        | ape         | base        | baste        | ate         | cave        | bay        | daze        | eight        |
| dame        | lane        | cape        | case        | haste        | date        | gave        | day        | faze        | sleigh       |
| fame        | mane        | gape        | vase        | paste        | fate        | nave        | gay        | gaze        | weigh        |
| game        | pane        | nape        |             | taste        | gate        | pave        | hay        | haze        |              |
| lame        | sane        | rape        |             | waste        | hate        | rave        | jay        | maze        |              |
| name        | vane        | tape        |             | chaste       | late        | save        | lay        | raze        |              |
| same        | wane        | drape       |             |              | mate        | wave        | may        | blaze       |              |
| tame        | crane       | grape       |             |              | rate        | brave       | nay        | glaze       |              |
| blame       |             | shape       |             |              | sate        | crave       | pay        | graze       |              |
| flame       |             |             |             |              | crate       | grave       | ray        |             |              |
| frame       |             |             |             |              | grate       | shave       | say        |             |              |
| shame       |             |             |             |              | plate       | slave       | way        |             |              |
|             |             |             |             |              | skate       |             | clay       |             |              |
|             |             |             |             |              | slate       |             | play       |             |              |
|             |             |             |             |              | state       |             | fray       |             |              |
|             |             |             |             |              |             |             | gray       |             |              |
|             |             |             |             |              |             |             | tray       |             |              |
|             |             |             |             |              |             |             | stay       |             |              |
|             |             |             |             |              |             |             | sway       |             |              |

## WORD PATTERNS—continued

## LONG E SOUNDS

| <b>-e</b> | <b>-ea</b> | <b>-each</b> | <b>-ead</b> | <b>-eak</b> | <b>-eal</b> | <b>-eam</b> | <b>-ean</b> | <b>-eap</b>  | <b>-eat</b> |
|-----------|------------|--------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|
| be        | pea        | each         | bead        | beak        | deal        | beam        | bean        | heap         | eat         |
| he        | sea        | beach        | lead        | leak        | heal        | ream        | dean        | leap         | beat        |
| me        | tea        | peach        | read        | peak        | meal        | seam        | lean        | reap         | feat        |
| we        | flea       | reach        | plead       | weak        | peal        | team        | mean        | cheap        | heat        |
| she       | plea       | teach        |             | bleak       | real        | cream       | wean        |              | meat        |
|           |            | bleach       |             | freak       | seal        | dream       | clean       | <b>-east</b> | neat        |
|           |            |              |             | speak       | veal        | gleam       | glean       | east         | peat        |
|           |            |              |             |             | zeal        |             |             | beast        | seal        |
|           |            |              |             |             | steal       |             |             | feast        | cheat       |
|           |            |              |             |             |             |             |             | least        | cleat       |
|           |            |              |             |             |             |             |             |              | pleat       |
|           |            |              |             |             |             |             |             |              | treat       |
|           |            |              |             |             |             |             |             |              | wheat       |

| <b>-eech</b> | <b>-eed</b> | <b>-ee</b> | <b>-eef</b> | <b>-eek</b> | <b>-eel</b> | <b>-eem</b> | <b>-eep</b> | <b>-eet</b> | <b>-ief</b> |
|--------------|-------------|------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| beech        | deed        | bee        | beef        | leek        | eel         | deem        | beep        | beet        | brief       |
| leech        | feed        | fee        | reef        | meek        | feel        | seem        | deep        | feet        | chief       |
|              | heed        | see        |             | peek        | heel        | teem        | jeep        | meet        | grief       |
|              | need        | tee        |             | reek        | keel        |             | keep        | fleet       | thief       |
|              | seed        | wee        |             | seek        | peel        | <b>-een</b> | peep        | greet       |             |
|              | weed        | free       |             | week        | reel        | keen        | seep        | sheet       | <b>-y</b>   |
|              | bleed       | tree       |             | cheek       |             | seen        | weep        | sleet       | carry       |
|              | breed       | glee       |             | creek       |             | teen        | creep       | sweet       | marry       |
|              | creed       | thee       |             | sleek       |             | green       | sheep       | tweet       | bunny       |
|              | freed       | three      |             |             |             | queen       | sleep       |             | funny       |
|              | greed       |            |             |             |             | sheen       | steep       |             | sunny       |
|              | speed       |            |             |             |             |             | sweep       |             |             |
|              | steed       |            |             |             |             |             |             |             |             |
|              | tweed       |            |             |             |             |             |             |             |             |

**WORD PATTERNS—continued****LONG I SOUNDS**

| <b>-ice</b> | <b>-ide</b> | <b>-ie</b> | <b>-ife</b> | <b>-igh</b> | <b>-ight</b> | <b>-ike</b> | <b>-ild</b> | <b>-ile</b> | <b>-ime</b> |
|-------------|-------------|------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| lice        | bide        | die        | life        | high        | fight        | bike        | mild        | file        | dime        |
| mice        | hide        | lie        | rife        | nigh        | light        | dike        | wild        | mile        | lime        |
| nice        | ride        | pie        | wife        | sigh        | might        | hike        | child       | pile        | time        |
| rice        | side        | tie        |             | thigh       | night        | like        |             | rile        | chime       |
| vice        | tide        | vie        |             |             | right        | mike        |             | tile        | crime       |
| slice       | wide        |            |             |             | sight        | pike        |             | vile        | grime       |
| spice       | bride       |            |             |             | tight        | spike       |             | smile       | slime       |
| twice       | glide       |            |             |             | bright       |             |             | while       |             |
|             | slide       |            |             |             | fright       |             |             |             |             |
|             |             |            |             |             | flight       |             |             |             |             |
|             |             |            |             |             | plight       |             |             |             |             |
|             |             |            |             |             | slight       |             |             |             |             |

| <b>-ind</b> | <b>-ine</b> | <b>-ipe</b> | <b>-ire</b> | <b>-ise</b> | <b>-ite</b> | <b>-ive</b> | <b>-y</b> | <b>-ye</b> |
|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-----------|------------|
| bind        | dine        | pipe        | ire         | rise        | bite        | dive        | by        | dye        |
| find        | fine        | ripe        | dire        | wise        | kite        | five        | my        | eye        |
| hind        | line        | wipe        | fire        |             | mite        | hive        | cry       | lye        |
| kind        | mine        | gripe       | hire        |             | site        | live        | dry       | rye        |
| mind        | nine        | swipe       | mire        |             | quite       | chive       | fly       |            |
| rind        | pine        |             | sire        |             | spite       | drive       | ply       |            |
| wind        | tine        |             | tire        |             | white       |             | fry       |            |
| blind       | vine        |             | wire        |             |             |             | shy       |            |
| grind       | shine       |             |             |             |             |             | sky       |            |
|             | spine       |             |             |             |             |             | sly       |            |
|             | swine       |             |             |             |             |             | spy       |            |
|             | thine       |             |             |             |             |             | sty       |            |
|             | twine       |             |             |             |             |             | thy       |            |
|             | whine       |             |             |             |             |             | try       |            |

## APPENDIX

WORD PATTERNS—*continued*

## LONG O SOUND

| <b>-o</b>    | <b>-oad</b> | <b>-oam</b> | <b>-oast</b> | <b>-oat</b> | <b>-obe</b> | <b>-ode</b> | <b>-oe</b>  | <b>-oke</b> | <b>-old</b> |
|--------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| go           | goad        | foam        | boast        | oat         | lobe        | ode         | doe         | coke        | old         |
| no           | load        | loam        | coast        | boat        | robe        | bode        | foe         | joke        | bold        |
| so           | road        | roam        | roast        | coat        | globe       | code        | hoe         | poke        | cold        |
|              | toad        |             | toast        | goat        |             | mode        | toe         | woke        | gold        |
| <b>-oach</b> |             | <b>-oan</b> |              | moat        |             | rode        | woe         | yoke        | hold        |
| coach        | <b>-oal</b> | loan        |              | bloat       |             |             |             | bloke       | mold        |
| poach        | coal        | moan        |              | float       |             |             |             | choke       | sold        |
| roach        | goal        | roan        |              | gloat       |             |             |             | smoke       | told        |
|              |             | groan       |              |             |             |             |             | spoke       |             |
| <b>-ole</b>  | <b>-olt</b> | <b>-ome</b> | <b>-one</b>  | <b>-ope</b> | <b>-ose</b> | <b>-ost</b> | <b>-ote</b> | <b>-ove</b> | <b>-ow</b>  |
| dole         | bolt        | dome        | bone         | cope        | hose        | host        | note        | cove        | bow         |
| hole         | colt        | home        | cone         | dope        | nose        | most        | rote        | dove        | low         |
| mole         | dolt        | Nome        | lone         | hope        | pose        | post        | tote        | rove        | mow         |
| pole         | jolt        |             | pone         | mope        | rose        |             | vote        | wove        | row         |
| role         | volt        |             | tone         | rope        | chose       |             | quote       |             | sow         |
| stole        |             |             | zone         | scope       | those       |             |             |             | tow         |
|              |             |             | shone        | slope       | close       |             |             |             | blow        |
|              |             |             | stone        |             |             |             |             |             | flow        |
|              |             |             |              |             |             |             |             |             | glow        |
|              |             |             |              |             |             |             |             |             | slow        |
|              |             |             |              |             |             |             |             |             | crow        |
|              |             |             |              |             |             |             |             |             | grow        |
|              |             |             |              |             |             |             |             |             | show        |
|              |             |             |              |             |             |             |             |             | snow        |

## LONG U SOUNDS

| <b>-ew</b> | <b>-ule</b> | <b>-use</b> | <b>-ute</b> |
|------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| few        | mule        | use         | cute        |
| hew        | yule        | fuse        | mute        |
| blew       |             | muse        | flute       |
| flew       |             |             |             |
| slew       |             |             |             |
| chew       |             |             |             |
| crew       |             |             |             |
| drew       |             |             |             |
| grew       |             |             |             |
| stew       |             |             |             |

WORD PATTERNS—*continued*

## OTHER SOUNDS IN WORD PATTERNS

| <b>-all</b>   | <b>-alk</b> | <b>-ar</b>    | <b>-arch</b> | <b>-arge</b> | <b>-ark</b>  | <b>-arm</b> | <b>-arn</b> | <b>-arp</b>  | <b>-arsh</b> |
|---------------|-------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|--------------|
| all           | talk        | bar           | march        | barge        | bark         | farm        | barn        | carp         | harsh        |
| ball          | walk        | car           | parch        | large        | dark         | harm        | darn        | harp         | marsh        |
| call          | chalk       | far           | starch       | charge       | hark         | charm       | yarn        | sharp        |              |
| fall          | stalk       | jar           |              |              | lark         |             |             |              |              |
| gall          |             | par           |              |              | mark         |             |             |              |              |
| hall          |             | tar           |              |              | park         |             |             |              |              |
| mall          |             | scar          |              |              | shark        |             |             |              |              |
| tall          |             | star          |              |              | spark        |             |             |              |              |
| wall          |             |               |              |              | stark        |             |             |              |              |
| small         |             |               |              |              |              |             |             |              |              |
| stall         |             |               |              |              |              |             |             |              |              |
| <b>-aught</b> | <b>-aul</b> | <b>-aunch</b> | <b>-aunt</b> | <b>-ause</b> | <b>-aw</b>   | <b>-awl</b> | <b>-en</b>  | <b>-er</b>   | <b>-ern</b>  |
| caught        | haul        | haunch        | gaunt        | cause        | caw          | awl         | brighten    | either       | fern         |
| naught        | maul        | launch        | haunt        | pause        | jaw          | bawl        | dampen      | fatter       | stern        |
| taught        |             | paunch        | jaunt        | clause       | law          | brawl       | darken      | matter       |              |
|               |             | staunch       | taunt        |              | maw          | crawl       | freshen     | poorer       |              |
|               |             |               | vaunt        |              | raw          | shawl       | hasten      | richer       |              |
|               |             |               |              |              | saw          |             | lengthen    | scatter      |              |
|               |             |               |              |              | chaw         |             | shorten     |              |              |
|               |             |               |              |              | claw         |             | silken      |              |              |
|               |             |               |              |              | flaw         |             |             |              |              |
|               |             |               |              |              | draw         |             |             |              |              |
| <b>-ew</b>    | <b>-ird</b> | <b>-irl</b>   | <b>-irt</b>  | <b>-oard</b> | <b>-oice</b> | <b>-oil</b> | <b>-oin</b> | <b>-oint</b> | <b>-oise</b> |
| dew           | bird        | girl          | dirt         | board        | voice        | oil         | coin        | joint        | noise        |
| Jew           | gird        | swirl         | shirt        | hoard        | choice       | boil        | loin        | point        | poise        |
| new           | third       | twirl         | skirt        |              |              | coil        |             |              |              |
| brew          |             | whirl         | squirt       |              |              | foil        |             |              |              |
| crew          |             |               |              |              |              | soil        |             |              |              |
| drew          |             |               |              |              |              | toil        |             |              |              |
| grew          |             |               |              |              |              | broil       |             |              |              |
| chew          |             |               |              |              |              | spoil       |             |              |              |
| flew          |             |               |              |              |              |             |             |              |              |
| slew          |             |               |              |              |              |             |             |              |              |
| stew          |             |               |              |              |              |             |             |              |              |

## APPENDIX

| <b>-oist</b> | <b>-oo</b> | <b>-ood</b> | <b>-ook</b> | <b>-ool</b> | <b>-oom</b> | <b>-oon</b> | <b>-oop</b> | <b>-oost</b> | <b>-oot</b> |
|--------------|------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|
| foist        | boo        | food        | book        | cool        | boom        | boon        | coop        | boost        | boot        |
| hoist        | coo        | mood        | cook        | fool        | doom        | coon        | hoop        | roost        | hoot        |
| joist        | moo        | brood       | hook        | pool        | loom        | goon        | loop        |              | loot        |
| moist        | too        |             | look        | drool       | room        | loon        | droop       |              | root        |
|              | zoo        |             | nook        | spool       | zoom        | moon        | troop       |              | toot        |
|              | shoo       |             | took        | stool       | gloom       | noon        | scoop       |              | scoot       |
|              |            |             | brook       |             | groom       | soon        | stoop       |              | shoot       |
|              |            |             | crook       |             |             | spoon       | swoop       |              |             |
|              |            |             | shook       |             |             | swoon       |             |              |             |

| <b>-ooth</b> | <b>-or</b> | <b>-ord</b> | <b>-ore</b> | <b>-ork</b> | <b>-orm</b> | <b>-orn</b> | <b>-ort</b> | <b>-orth</b> | <b>-ouch</b> |
|--------------|------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|--------------|
| booth        | or         | cord        | ore         | cork        | form        | born        | fort        | forth        | ouch         |
| tooth        | for        | ford        | wore        | fork        | norm        | corn        | sort        | north        | couch        |
|              | nor        | lord        | chore       | pork        | storm       | horn        | tort        |              | pouch        |
|              |            |             | score       | York        |             | morn        |             |              | vouch        |
|              |            |             | swore       | stork       |             | torn        |             |              |              |
|              |            |             |             |             |             | worn        |             |              |              |

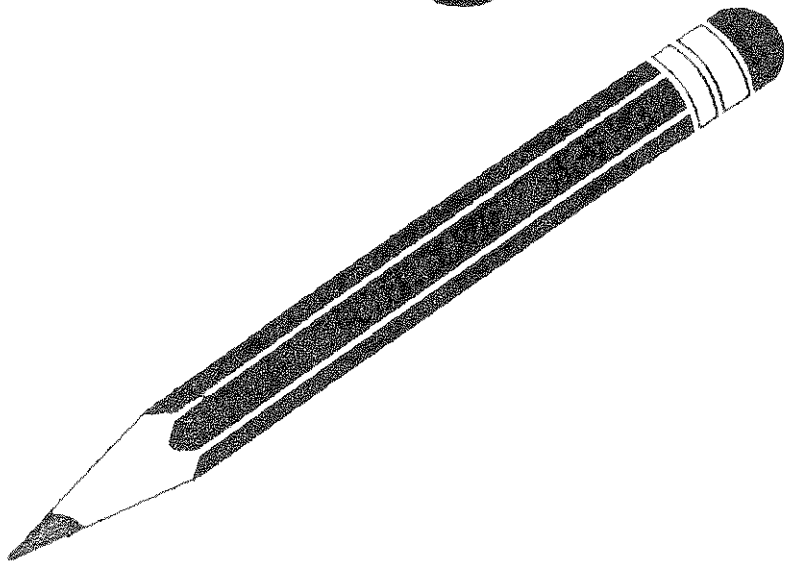
| <b>-ought</b> | <b>-ould</b> | <b>-ound</b> | <b>-our</b> | <b>-ouse</b> | <b>-out</b> | <b>-outh</b> | <b>-ow</b> | <b>-owl</b> | <b>-own</b> |
|---------------|--------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|------------|-------------|-------------|
| ought         | could        | bound        | four        | house        | out         | mouth        | bow        | owl         | down        |
| bought        | would        | found        | pour        | louse        | bout        | south        | cow        | cowl        | gown        |
| fought        | should       | hound        |             | mouse        | gout        |              | how        | fowl        | town        |
| sought        |              | mound        |             |              | pout        |              | now        | howl        | brown       |
| brought       |              | pound        |             |              | shout       |              | vow        | jowl        | crown       |
| thought       |              | round        |             |              | spout       |              | wow        | yowl        | clown       |
|               |              | sound        |             |              | stout       |              | plow       |             | frown       |
|               |              | wound        |             |              | trout       |              |            |             |             |
|               |              | ground       |             |              |             |              |            |             |             |

| <b>-sion</b> | <b>-tion</b> | <b>-ude</b> | <b>-ue</b> | <b>-uke</b> | <b>-ull</b> | <b>-une</b> | <b>-ush</b> | <b>-ute</b> |
|--------------|--------------|-------------|------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| decision     | action       | dude        | rue        | duke        | bull        | dune        | bush        | lute        |
| devison      | motion       | nude        | sue        | Luke        | full        | June        | push        | flute       |
| occasion     | nation       | rude        | blue       |             | pull        | tune        |             |             |
| collision    | mention      | crude       | clue       |             |             |             |             |             |
| television   | fraction     |             | glue       |             |             |             |             |             |
|              | attention    |             | true       |             |             |             |             |             |





# Just Writing



# Writing (Access for All)

## The Writing Process

The writing process consists of composing, spelling and handwriting. Composing involves planning and expressive language skills, which include the following:

- the ability to formulate and articulate ideas (although this might be in a non-spoken form such as sign)
- the awareness of linguistic boundaries, e.g. a sentence
- narrative skills such as sequencing, structuring
- vocabulary to achieve expressive purposes such as describing or explaining, including the ability to use language non-literally as in idioms, analogies, figures of speech
- knowledge and use of syntax, including grammatical usage, use of complex syntax and linking words
- the ability to categorize and classify.

Producing a piece of writing relies on putting ideas into a written form; that is, being able to spell and write by hand or produce all the words through some other form, e.g. technological. Writing and spelling must be automatic in order for the writer to concentrate on expressing his or her ideas. If learners are unable to develop automatic spelling and writing, they will find it extremely difficult to express themselves on paper.

**Spelling** is a sub-skill of writing; it is primarily a visual-motor skill. Whereas reading relies on recognition, spelling relies on the recall of a precise sequence of letters. A good speller is able to see if a word looks right and will have integrated the conventions of English spelling to be able to suggest an alternative if it looks wrong. The **motor memory** is also important in spelling: the good speller can spell automatically, without thinking about the letters, and can 'feel' if the hand makes an error. Those who can use phonics will integrate sound with letter patterns, but good spelling is achievable without it: for example, the profoundly deaf can become good spellers.

Writers with different disabilities or learning difficulties will find different aspects of writing more or less problematic, and may have profiles as writers which cross several levels.

## **Spelling difficulties**

Spelling is rightly a priority for many learners. If they cannot make even an approximate guess at a spelling, or have to think about the spelling of nearly every word, any attempts at expressing their ideas are severely limited. Even if their spelling does not seem 'that bad', spelling problems will interfere with learners' ability to write at the level of their spoken language or to express the complexity and range of their ideas.

Learners may have a range of difficulties with spelling:

- poor visual memory for words
- sequencing and directional (e.g. b/d, d/g) confusions
- omitting or confusing sounds because they cannot discriminate or hold them in short-term memory
- poor motor integration or eye-hand co-ordination which results in omitting or repeating letters or syllables.

Dyslexic learners and many with learning difficulties will have problems remembering and applying rules, as well as acquiring the conventions of English spelling. English spelling conventions will also be difficult for deaf learners whose first language is sign.

## **Handwriting and motor co-ordination difficulties: dyslexia, dyspraxia and dysgraphia**

Handwriting problems may be caused by a physical disability, fine motor function impairment, or poor motor integration, i.e. the inability to integrate the motor function in order to develop rapid automatic handwriting. The latter is sometimes called **dysgraphia** and may be a part of a greater motor integration and/or spatial perceptual problem, often called **dyspraxia**, or may be part of a general **dyslexic** problem. Current research suggests that problems in developing automaticity is a feature of dyslexia.

Learners with these difficulties may have to think about every letter as they construct it, and may find it difficult to follow a motor sequence or

change direction when forming letters. This means they forget what they want to say, as all their concentration is going on forming the letters. They may have difficulties with controlling the pen, which results in an aching hand after a short period of writing. Also letter construction may begin to break down and become messy and unreadable.

Poor motor integration may result in the hand not doing what is intended; for instance, the hand may go up to make a 'b' instead of down to make a 'p', or may repeat a letter pattern. This can result in a lot of crossings-out and frustration, as well as unintended spelling errors.

Poor handwriting may be compounded by physical factors such as poor muscle tone.

**An effective approach to handwriting problems should include a combination of the following:**

1. explaining and exploring handwriting difficulties with the learner, along with demonstrating how we write (i.e. forming letters while moving across the page)
2. physical strategies to develop control such as squeezing a tennis ball, using large movements to practice handwriting, e.g. on newsprint taped to the wall, exploring writing aids or pens to find what works best
3. teaching letter formation and cursive writing directly - this can be practiced in the context of an individual spelling programme
4. exploring alternatives, e.g. computer keyboard and/or voice-recognition technology, keyguards, concept keyboards, touch screens, etc.

Many will find that use of the keyboard helps, as it does not require the user to follow a motor sequence, but only to tap a key. It also frees them from endlessly crossing out words and enables text to be moved around easily. For others, motor problems are so severe that even the keyboard is difficult, and voice-recognition technology is essential in enabling these learners to develop writing skills.

## **Diagnostic assessment**

Writing analysis based on a piece of free writing is an excellent way to make an informal diagnostic assessment. In order to use a piece of writing effectively, however, the piece of writing should be of the length and at the

level the learner is using in his or her life, work or on a training course, using an appropriate range of vocabulary. This will need to be established with the learner. The learner should also be encouraged to aim for fluency and not to worry about spellings. It is better to make a guess at spelling in order to concentrate on using the words the learner wants.

The teacher should observe the learner writing, e.g. how he or she holds the pen and paper and forms the letters, whether there is pressure on the pen, whether the learner has to stop and think about spellings, etc.

Learners may have difficulty with any or several of the following:

- getting ideas down on paper, including word retrieval
- planning and organizing information and ideas
- expressing ideas coherently
- Internalizing conventions of written texts
- grammar and sentence structure
- vocabulary and expressive language
- spelling, often avoiding words they cannot spell
- handwriting
- punctuation
- proof-reading.

The teacher should then analyze the above, including range and complexity as well as accuracy (for more detailed guidelines, see Klein (1993)).

The writing analysis should form the basis of a discussion with the learner about strengths and weaknesses and strategies the learner uses. This in turn can not only help to establish the learner's profile of skills, but also help to determine appropriate strategies to develop skills and compensate for difficulties.

## Spelling error analysis

Spelling error analysis is particularly useful not only in identifying spelling difficulties but also in helping learners to find strategies for learning spellings that suit their strengths and weaknesses.

To get an accurate picture of a learner's spelling difficulties, it may be useful to give the learner a dictation. This is because in a piece of free writing the learner may avoid words that are difficult, and also because a

dictation will include words with a range of letter patterns and sounds and thus show up specific difficulties more clearly.

Consequently, when choosing a dictation, one designed for diagnostic purposes will give the most accurate information of the learner's difficulties. The learner also needs to make between 20 and 25 errors to give a clear picture of the pattern of difficulties. The tutor should explain to the learner that it is important to make errors so the problems can be identified; learners need to understand that it is not a test and that errors are 'good'.

Errors can then be categorized as good phonic attempts, sequential errors, errors that show lack of knowledge about rules or conventions, errors that show problems with discriminating or holding sounds, and errors that show poor motor integration. (For a diagnostic dictation and details on analyzing errors, see Klein (1993). For a range of appropriate diagnostic dictations, see Sunderland et al (1997).)

The analysis of spelling errors can help teachers and learners to focus on the 'difficult bits' of the word and thus to show the learner that he or she spelled a lot of the word right. They also help to focus on the type of problem, for example that the learner can't 'hear' the sounds; thus, there is both a reason for the poor spelling and a positive way of approaching it that does not rely on sound, e.g. through visual patterns and words within words.

## Phonics and spelling

Phonics can be a useful aid in teaching spelling, but it is important to be aware of its limitations. As spelling is primarily a visual-motor skill, spellings must be learned and recalled. Good spellers rely on the look of the word.

There are many alternative ways to spell common sounds in English: for instance, parents, parants, pairents, pairants, pearants, pearents are all acceptable phonic variations, yet only one is correct.

Partially hearing and deaf learners will have obvious difficulties with phonics. Many dyslexic learners will be unable to discriminate, segment and/or hold sounds in the short-term memory as they write. Learning letter strings and word structure through visual and meaning-based strategies is generally more effective for these learners and can help them see when a word 'looks right'. Even learners with poor visual memories for words will need strategies such as exaggerated pronunciation or a mnemonic to help remember what words look like, e.g. k-nife, kitchen knife.

## **Parts of Speech**

### **Nouns**

A noun is the name of a person, place, thing, or idea. Nouns are often but not always by an article (a, an, the).

### **Pronouns**

A pronoun is a word used in place of a noun. Usually the pronouns substitutes for a specific noun, known as an antecedent.

### **Verbs**

The verb of a sentence usually expresses action or being. It is composed of a main verb possibly preceded by one or more helping verbs.

### **Adjectives**

An adjective is a word used to modify, or describe, a noun or pronoun. An adjective usually answers one of these questions: Which one? What kind of? How many?

### **Adverbs**

An adverb is a word used to modify a verb, an adjective or another adverb. It usually answers one of these questions: When? Where? How? Why?

### **Prepositions**

A preposition is a word placed before a noun or pronoun to form a phrase modifying another word in the sentence. The prepositional phrase nearly always functions as an adjective or as an adverb.

### **Conjunctions**

Conjunctions join words, phrases, or clauses, and they indicate the relation between the elements joined.

### **Interjections**

Interjections are words used to express surprise or emotion.

## Informal Assessment of Writing

Look for the following things when reviewing student writing:

1. **Fluency:** How much do students write? Does the text seem to flow?
2. **Structure:** does the text have structure? Does it narrate; describe; give a sequence; go through the process; give examples; list reasons, causes, effects; state a problem and offer a solution? Or does the text seem to ramble on with no apparent sense or organization.
3. **Vocabulary:** Do students vary use of vocabulary or do they constantly use the same words over and over again in their writing/ Do they use vocabulary appropriately? Is the vocabulary concrete (words you can 'see'), or do they use vague pronouns and linking verbs (is, was, were)?
4. **Development of Ideas:** Do students explain key ideas, using examples or details? Or do they expect the reader to read their minds?
5. **Syntax (word order within a sentence)**  
Do all sentences follow subject and verb pattern or do the students vary their sentence structure with introductory phrases or clauses?
6. **Mechanics and Usage:** Does student have trouble with spelling, subject-verb agreement, pronoun agreement, verb forms, pronoun forms, punctuation, or capitalization? Do student write incomplete sentences (fragments) or run several sentences together with commas or no punctuation?



## Journal Writing Ideas

Interesting things you see and hear

•

Personal thoughts and feelings

•

Ideas for stories or poems

•

Subjects you are studying

•

Important events

•

Books you've read

•

Daily happenings

•

Writing a poem

## **Types of Journals**

### **Dialogue Journal**

In a dialogue journal, you and a friend, family member, or teacher write to each other. You can write about experiences you've had, books you've read, and ideas you think about.

### **Diary**

A diary includes daily events in your life. In a personal journal, you would think and write about these events rather than simply record them.

### **Response Journal**

You may have strong feelings about some of the books you read. You can write about these feelings in a response journal.

## Using a dialogue journal

### Introduction

There are many ways to use a dialogue journal. Be creative and adapt the activity to the situation and the learner's needs.

Keeping a dialogue journal can be a practical way to help learners:

- develop reading and writing fluency
- improve spelling and handwriting
- understand that writing is a means of communicating, and
- make reading and writing part of everyday life.

Using dialogue journals gives teachers an opportunity to interact with learners on a personal level, if appropriate, or on an academic level.

Teachers can:

- answer questions asked by the learner
- ask questions that help clarify learners' thinking or stimulate ideas
- get to know more about the learners, their language, and their culture, and
- use the journal as a record of a learner's progress.

### Guidelines

Here are some guidelines to follow when you use dialogue journals:

- Be aware that oral societies may resist the use of dialogue journals. It may not make much sense to them to write to someone who is present and can easily be engaged in conversation.
- Be careful that subjects you write about are culturally acceptable.
- Decide whether or not to correct the journal entries of learners.
  - ☐ Some people believe that journals should be corrected and are a good place to work on spelling and grammar. Adult learners especially often want their work corrected.
  - ☐ Other people believe the teacher should not correct spelling, grammar, or handwriting mistakes, but should model correct spelling or usage in the return entry as part of the reply to the learner and use problem words more than once to reinforce their correct usage.
- Use journals outside of classroom situations on a more personal level.

## Steps

Here are the steps to follow to use dialogue journals with learners:

1. Write a personal message in the journal that is designed to get a response from the learner.

**Examples:** Start with a question such as

- "Have you planted your garden? What do you usually plant?"
- "What is the next event to celebrate? How will you celebrate it?"

2. Have the learner write a response and return the journal to the teacher to continue the dialogue.

**Variations:**

- Have the class discuss and agree upon a question for the next entry in the journals.
  - Have learners exchange journals and read each other's thoughts and ideas.
  - Instruct learners to make specific kinds of entries in the journals:
    - ☐ Questions about classroom material that is unclear.
    - ☐ Reactions to specific classroom material or activities.
    - ☐ Feelings about the training or other common experiences.
    - ☐ A summary of the training or a day's class.
3. Continue to exchange the journal in this way to keep the dialogue going.

## Sources

- Froese 1991
- Holdaway 1979
- Laubach Literacy Action 1994:107.
- Robson, DeVergilio and DeButts 1990
- Staton and Kreeft-Peyton 1986
- Weaver 1990
- Whisler 1986

## In Their Own Words

### The Language Experience Approach: A Method to Reach Reluctant or Struggling Readers

What should you do when your student just can't get the hang of reading or writing? And what should you do when he or she balks at reading the books you have available? The "language experience approach" is a wonderful way to get ALL students eager to read and write. Tutors using the language experience approach take dictation from their students, (or have the students do their own writing) then use the students' own words as reading material. Sometimes tutors will engage their students in some activity beforehand to provide a topic that students will want to talk about.

Here's an example of how you might use this effective approach:

1. Ask about a subject (be it a television show, video game or a recent experience) that your student enjoys. Encourage your student to talk about what interests him most, in whatever manner is comfortable for him.
2. As your student speaks, neatly write down his experience **IN HIS OWN WORDS**. If he says "don't" where you would say "doesn't", you should still write "don't." This is the time for your student to express his own thoughts in his own way. Of course, you'll want to write with printed letters, not cursive.
3. When your student has finished his description or narration, review his "writing" and read it together. You may be surprised how easily your student can read his own words--even words that might otherwise be considered difficult.
4. Your student's creation will be important to him and should be treated as such. Encourage him or her to illustrate it and/or staple it into the form of a book. (Although older students may not be interested in this last step, the language experience approach is useful at any age.) Many teachers and tutors find that the language experience approach is enjoyable as well as effective. What could be more interesting for a student than reading his own words about a subject that he knows and cares about? Or a story that he has created all by himself?

## **Language Experience Story**

The text that results from a language experience activity from the learner's personal experiences

Creating language experience stories is a practical way to teach that reading and writing are like talking. It helps learners understand that what they think about and say can be written, and what is written can be read.

### **Guidelines**

Here are some guidelines to follow when you create a language experience story:

- Write the story on a chalkboard or a writing pad at first so that is easy to edit.
- Have learner begin to write the stories themselves as they progress
- Progress in their reading and writing skills.

### **Steps for Individual Language Experience Story**

1. Have the learner dictate an experience or story to you.
2. Write down what the learner says.
3. Read back to the learner what you wrote to be sure it is correct.
4. Decide with the learner what changes to make, if any.
5. Read and reread the story together, tracking as you read.

### **Group Language Experience Story**

Here are the steps to follow to create a group language experience story:

1. Arrange a language experience activity.
2. Invite learners (one at a time) to dictate a sentence about the experience for the story.
3. Write on the chalkboard exactly what they say.
4. Read the story back to them, and then decide with the learners what changes to make, if any.
5. Read and reread the story together, tracking with a pointer.

# **Writing Domains**

## **Introduction**

The four writing domains are categories that define the purpose of writing. In order to be a competent writer, students must have exposure to and experience each domain.

These ideas will help balance the writing program. Each student has a particular writing strength, and by creating a balanced writing program, you are assuring that each of your students can experience success. Use the ideas to plan lessons and develop a yearlong writing program that includes activities from all the writing domains. The results will be improved writing skill for all of your students.

## **Teaching the Domains**

As you begin to teach the writing domains, you will notice that it can be difficult to categorize a writing task as one particular domain. Explain to students that your expectation is to see the focus of the piece dictated by the writing domain of the assignment.

There are several ways to introduce the writing domains. Spend a month or two on each of the five domains, exploring the activities within that domain. Or, explore a popular theme at the student's level and use a variety of writing domains to accommodate the purposes of the lessons and activities. The important thing is placing equal emphasis on all the domains so all students can experience success.

## Practical/Informative

Most writing in the practical/informative domain focuses on social and business correspondence. The goal of the writer is to provide clear information to the reader.

It is very important for students to understand that when writing in this domain, their goal is to present information, not analyze it. Use the example of a news report versus a commentary to illustrate.

When writing in this domain, students need to show attention to details and have a deep concern for accuracy. They should also take notice of the tone and clarity of the piece.

## Ideas

- Write a recipe
- Write weather or sport report
- Write your home address
- Write the letters of the alphabet
- Write the instructions for your favorite game
- Write an advice column dealing with a common problem
- Write an invitation to a party
- Write a business letter complaining about a product
- Write a news report on a current event
- Write a self-assessment on a recent assignment
- Write an essay about your qualifications for a summer job
- Write a thank you note
- Write a report about an accident on the playground
- Write a postcard from a vacation location
- Write a letter of reference for a friend
- Write directions for how to build or make something
- \*Write a memo to the caseworker about a housing concern*
- Write notes on a lecture
- \*Write directions to get from your home to your job*



## **Imaginative/Narrative**

The focus of the imaginative/narrative (creative) writing domain is to tell a story, based on an actual or fictional experience.

The story should tell the reader what happened using as many details as possible. The story should be told in chronological order, thereby making sequencing skills critical to this domain.

As students write their stories, they should focus on ordering, creating seamless transitions between paragraphs, building suspense leading to the climax, and developing a clear beginning and ending.

## **Ideas**

Write what an object would say if it could talk

Write captions for a cartoon you draw

Write a fictional biography for a famous person/athlete

Write about a special memory you have

Write a riddle

Write your interpretation of an old saying

Write the dialogue between two animals

Write a plot for a mystery story

Write about your first day as principal of a school

Write about a day you would like to live over again

Write a fairy tale twist

Write a fable

Write a new ending to a story

Write about an imaginary friend you have

Write a myth

Write new words to a popular song

Write a limerick

Write your acceptance speech for the Oscar you won

Write a play where two favorite TV characters meet

Write a tall tale

Write a page in the class diary

Write a summary for a story your teacher read

## **Sensory/Descriptive**

The sensory/descriptive domain challenges students to create a picture for the reader using words. It is necessary for writers to draw upon all of their senses to create vivid descriptions.

When students write in this domain, they should make every effort to choose precise words that engage the reader and make him or her experience the writer's feelings and perceptions.

This is often described as the easiest domain because it deals with the concrete.

### **Ideas**

- Write a detailed description of a character
- Write a journal entry about an event that happened today
- Write dialogue between two characters in a story
- Write an advertisement for your favorite toy
- Write an acrostic poem
- Write a diary for a story character
- Write a list of descriptive words for each sense
- Write a character sketch
- Write a letter to a friend describing a good day you had
- Write a description of your favorite animal
- Close your eyes for one minute. Describe what you heard.
- Write a Haiku
- Write about a piece of artwork in detail
- Write a diamante poem
- Write a list of words to describe your emotions
- Write descriptive clues about a famous person.

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Write new words to a popular song

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Write your acceptance speech for the Oscar you won

Write a play where two favorite TV characters meet

Write a tall tale

Write a page in the class diary

Write a summary for a story your teacher read

## **Technological**

This is an addition to the traditional four writing domains. It is added to this resource to draw attention to the need for student to develop the skills to write in a technological environment.

The activities provided are those which students will need experience with in order to be successful in the information age.

### **Ideas**

- Write an e-mail message
- Write text for a web page
- Write a message to an online pen pal
- Write a multimedia report
- Write a storyboard for a video
- Write a script for a video
- Write search terms for a web site
- Publish your writing online
- Complete an online form
- Sign an online guest book

## **Analytical/Expository**

The analytical/expository domain places emphasis on careful organization and development. The intention is to detail the 'how' and 'why' about a subject.

The writer's goal in this domain is to explain and analyze information as well as influence and persuade the reader.

This domain is described as the most difficult because it is the most abstract.

## **Ideas**

- Write an analysis of a character's actions
- Write an outline to use to write a report
- Write an editorial on a topic you are interested in
- Write some good excuses for not having your homework
- Write a persuasive letter to your parents about a privilege
- Write a movie review
- Write a research paper
- Write a speech about an issue you feel strongly about
- Write a letter to the editor of the school or local newspaper
- Write an opinion paper on violence in television
- Write an article for the local newspaper
- Write a campaign speech
- Write an analysis of your progress at school
- Write an argument for a debate

Concetta Doti Ryan (1998) *Quick Flip Ideas for Writing Domains: Improve Writing Skills at Any Age with the Flip of a Page*, Dana Point, Ca: Edupress, Inc.

## **Guidelines: Writing For Adults With Limited Reading Skills**

**Developed by: Nancy Gaston and Patricia Daniels, FNS**

### **Introduction**

Approximately 27 million U.S. adults are considered functionally illiterate. This means they have not learned to read or cannot read well enough to understand most of the printed material available--and necessary--in today's society.

Identifying these people can be difficult. Many have learned to cope, in varying degrees, with their literacy handicap. Many manage to hide their limitations from most of the people with whom they interact.

The following guidelines are intended to help in preparing written materials for adults with limited reading skills. It is directed to writers and editors who have never written for low-literacy audiences or who want to sharpen their skills, as well as to persons not trained as writers and editors but whose responsibilities require preparation of such materials.

The materials discussed in the guidelines are assumed to be informational; the goal is to prepare messages from which readers can gain knowledge. Basic points in preparing any informational material are addressed: Know the characteristics of the audience so that the material is appropriate; clearly identify and organize the message; and present the material in a way to get and hold readers' attention long enough for them to retain the message.

The guidelines do not contain new information. Rather they present information compiled from a variety of resources. Neither are they meant to be comprehensive. Additional grammar, art, graphics, and design resources might be needed to supplement the information, depending on the author's writing and editing experience. A selected list of references for additional information is included in this booklet.

Many of the examples used in the guidelines relate to food and nutrition, however, the concepts they illustrate are applicable to any topic.

After you have used or read "Guidelines: Writing for Adults With Limited Reading Skills", please evaluate its usefulness. An evaluation form is included in the back of the booklet. Your comments and evaluations will help the author develop any future supplemental materials or revisions to the guidelines.

## Know Your Audience

To be effective in writing for adults with limited reading skills, you must understand some of their characteristics. Keep in mind one basic point -- the lack of good reading and comprehension skills is not an indication of your readers' intelligence. Your writing style should be simple and direct without "talking down" to them. A reader with limited reading skills often:

- Reads at a level at least 1 to 2 school grades below the highest grade completed. Anyone with a reading level below the 5th grade does not have enough language fluency to make good use of written materials.
- Has a short attention span. The message should be direct, short, and specific.
- Depends on visual cues to clarify and interpret words. Appropriate pictures, illustrations and graphics must work in conjunction with words.
- Has difficulty in understanding complex ideas. The message must be broken down into basic points with supporting information.
- Lacks a broad set of inferences other than personal experiences from which to draw when reading. Personally involving readers by applying the material to their lifestyle makes it more meaningful.

## Deciding On And Organizing Your Message

Ask yourself what the reader needs to know about the subject. List the ideas or concepts you want to convey and refine them to their simplest forms. Then organize the presentation of your message.

- Be consistent in presenting and organizing the information, from idea to idea and from page to page. Consistency provides continuity to help the reader follow the points you want to make.
- Put important information either first or last. Even good readers have a tendency to forget or skip over information between the introductory and summary sections.
- Summarize or repeat ideas or information often to refresh a reader's memory, particularly when preparing materials in a series.
- Present one idea on a single page (or two pages if they are face to face). This allows the reader to complete an idea without the distraction of having to turn pages. Simple ideas should not need more than two facing pages.
- Stay with one idea at a time, presenting only the most relevant information. Avoid going off on tangents.
- Be specific, concise, and accurate so the reader has only the most essential information to think about or decisions to make while reading. Break complex ideas down into sub-ideas.



- Start with the completed idea you want understood, then provide an explanation or give "how to" information.
- Sequence information logically. The following are all good sequencing techniques:
  - Step - by - step ( 1., 2., 3.)
  - Chronological (a time line)
  - Topical (using main topics and sub-topics)

## Writing Your Message

To the unskilled reader all of the physical elements of the written message are important. Words, sentences, and paragraphs should all work together to make reading easier, enjoyable, and more easily comprehended. Your goal is to keep the "story" or message moving so it does not get boring.

## Tips On Using Words

Choose and use your words carefully. That does not necessarily mean using fewer words to explain an idea. Unskilled readers can become frustrated and disinterested in the material if they do not understand or relate to the words on a page. The list of frequently used written words given on page 16 can be helpful in word selection. Words appropriate to the cultural and environmental backgrounds of the readers can be added to the list.

- Avoid using abstract words/phrases. If you must use them, help the reader understand them through examples and pictures. For example:

Avoid: "Labels let you on the inside."

Better: "Food labels can tell you a lot about the food inside the package."

- Use short, non-technical words of the two syllables or less. Hyphenated words are counted as one polysyllabic word.
- Use live, active VERBS and strong, concrete NOUNS to add strength and emphasis to sentences. Avoid adjectives and adverbs. For example:

KEEP your own YARD and STREET clean.

PICK up TRASH around your HOME.

PUT TRASH in the proper CONTAINER.

WORK with your NEIGHBOR to clean up AREAS in your NEIGHBORHOOD and to keep them clean.

- Use words and expressions familiar to the reader. If you must introduce unfamiliar words, explain them through simple definition, word/picture

associations, or by example. Repeat new words at short intervals to make them familiar. For example:

### Aquaculture

Many farmers raise catfish and other fish in ponds on their farms. This kind of farming is called aquaculture.

Aquaculture farming works this way. Farmers buy small fish called fingerlings and feed them in the farm ponds. The fish grow to weigh about one or two pounds. Then they are caught and sold to grocery stores and restaurants.

A lot of catfish can be raised in a pond. Aquaculture is a good way to raise a lot of food in a small space. Aquaculture is a good way for some farmers to make money.

- Avoid sentences with double negatives. Use of negative words may not be objectionable, but positive statements are more motivating. For example:

Avoid: "Do not eat non-nutritious snacks."

Better: "Choose snack foods that are high in nutrients"

- Avoid a writing style that uses:

- abbreviations (unless commonly recognizable, i.e.USA)
- contractions
- acronyms
- unfamiliar spelling of words
- quotation marks

Persons with limited reading skills may not understand them and, more importantly, their eyes may not read over them smoothly.

- Avoid statistics. Often they are extraneous and difficult for unskilled readers to interpret.
- Use words with single meanings. Based on how they are used, words, like pictures, can mean different things to different people. For example:

"Poor readers" (unskilled)

"Poor readers" (limited income)

### Tips On Writing Sentences

- The three key elements of a sentence (length, punctuation and structure) work together to provide sentence rhythm. Their use or misuse influences

the clarity and comprehension of a sentence and the reader's attention. To keep your reader's attention vary sentence rhythm.

**Sentence length.** Short sentences averaging 8-10 words are ideal. Longer ones tend to contain multiple ideas. They probably should be made into two sentences. To keep sentences short avoid unnecessary words, descriptive phrases and clauses, and parenthetical expressions (clarifying or explanatory remarks put in parenthesis).

**Sentence punctuation.** Asking questions to emphasize a point is a good technique, wouldn't you say? Exclamation points are good for emphasizing your message, too! But, they can get misused through overuse! So watch it!

**Sentence structure.** Usually the subject precedes the verb in a sentence. But sometimes, to vary sentence structure, try putting the verb in front of the noun. For example:

"The use of exclamation points should be minimized."

"Minimize the use of exclamation points."

- Write generally in the active voice. Active sentences place "doers" before "action," clearly showing the "doer" doing the action. Active sentences present concise, logical, and more direct information to the readers, making a stronger statement than passive sentences. Passive sentences have a form of the verb "to be" (am, is, are, was, were, be, being, been) plus a main verb ending in "en" or "ed". Often passive sentences are wordy and roundabout. The receiver of the verb's action comes before the verb, and the "doer" comes after. For example:

Active: "Jane identified a variety of trees."

(doer) (verb)(receiver)

Passive: "A variety of trees were identified by Jane."

(receiver) (verb) (doer)

## Tips On Writing Paragraphs

- Tell readers only what they need to know. Excess information can be confusing and distracting. For example:

### Excessive:

"There are many ways to keep food safe to eat. One way to help keep food safe is to always wash your hands before getting food ready to eat. Other things that touch the food should be clean, too, such as pans, knives, spoons, countertops, mixing bowls and dishes. This is very important if you plan to eat the food raw, such as in green

salads. You can pick up bacteria on your hands from things you touch during the day. The bacteria can get on the food you are preparing. There are many kinds of bacteria. Some bacteria will not hurt you, but some of the bacteria can cause you to be ill. Every year many people get ill from eating foods that were prepared by someone who did not keep their hands or cooking tools clean."

**Better:**

"Always wash your hands before getting food ready to eat. Make sure the pans, knives, bowls, spoons, cutting boards and other cooking tools are clean before you use them. Keeping your hands and cooking tools clean is VERY important if you plan to eat the food raw, such as in a green salad."

- Sequence information logically. Build connections between what the reader already knows and any new information presented. For example:

"You may know someone who was sick from eating food that was spoiled. Sometimes spoiled food does not look or taste spoiled. Here are some rules that can help you keep food safe to eat.

Keep food clean.

Keep hot foods hot.

Keep cold foods cold."

- Use short paragraphs.

## **Tips On Headings**

Headings are useful organization tools. They give an ordered look to the material, help readers locate information quickly, and give cues about the message content.

- Short explanatory headings are more instructional than single words that tend to be abstract. Abstract words are not specific enough. If readers must decipher words, you \ may lose their attention.
- Visuals with headings allow readers to react before more detailed information is given, particularly if the information is new.
- Headings are most effective when used with longer paragraphs, but for unskilled readers they are also appropriate for shorter messages.
- Captions or headings should summarize and emphasize important information.

## Using Illustrations To Support The Message

Photographs and line art attract and keep a reader's interest and are often remembered longer than words. Properly chosen and placed illustrations make the text more meaningful and reduce the burden of details in the text.

Illustrations should be used with a specific informational purpose in mind, not just as decoration. They should emphasize, explain, or summarize the text.

- Place illustrations, along with any captions, next to the related text.
- Use captions or text that tell readers what to look for in the illustrations. People see different things in the same picture, based on their experiences and knowledge.
- Keep illustrations simple by removing unneeded background or extraneous detail. Each variation in types of line, shapes, textures, and spatial arrangements adds to the complexity of the illustration.
- Use realistic pictures of people or activities to which a reader can identify. By being able to identify with characters or action in a picture, a reader may feel more personally involved with the message. Choose full-face pictures of people or illustrations that show definite actions that are easy to understand.
- Be cautious in using two illustrations showing wanted versus unwanted behavior or action. If the difference is not distinct, the reader may get the wrong message.
- Illustrations should get the reader's attention and complement the message, not dominate the reader's attention.

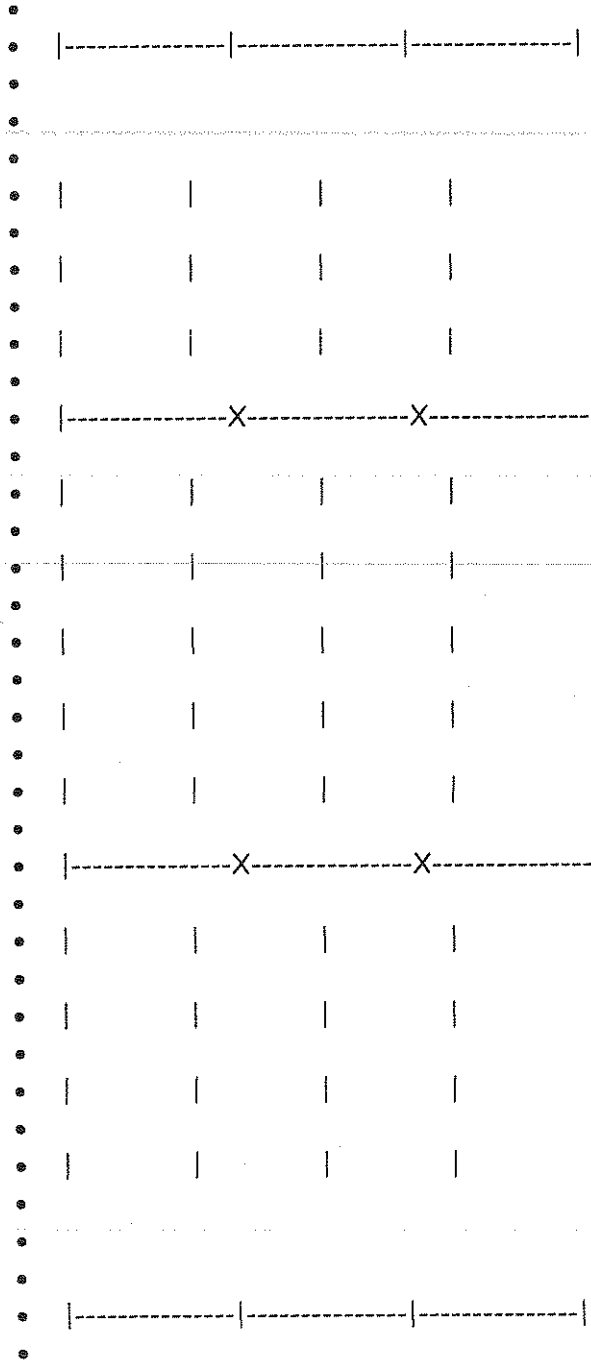
## Formatting To Get Attention

If your written material does not attract the attention of its audience, chances are your message will never be read. Both the overall visual presentation and the written message are important in developing useful and effective materials. Your format should be a simple, uncluttered, and balanced layout of text, illustrations, and design features. Once you have finished formatting, try the "upside-down" test. If you turn the finished layout upside-down, it should look as good and be as appealing as it does right side up.

## Tips On Design And Layout

Balance illustrations and words with background space. Lots of white space and wide margins will make your work seem simple and uncluttered.

- Start the message in the upper left corner or upper middle of the page.
- Put text and illustrations of greatest interest in the places marked by X's around the center square of a page, as if it had been divided into thirds both horizontally and vertically. For example:



- Number frames of sequential or grouped information. Numbering leads a reader logically through the message.
- Avoid lengthy lists. Unskilled readers have trouble remembering items on a list. Also, like most of us, they get bored reading lists.

### Tips On Lettering

- Select a style and size of typeface (lettering) that is easy to look at and read.
- A simple type face without italics, serifs, or curls is good. Handwriting (script) is difficult for unskilled readers to read. A good range of typeface sizes would be from 10-14 points.
- Mix upper and lower case lettering together. They are easier to read than **LETTERING IN ALL CAPITALS.**
- Avoid crowding letters. Rely on what is pleasing to the eye. Try mixing both mechanical and optical spacing techniques:

Mechanical spacing is equal distance between letters without regard to letter shape.

Optional spacing allows shapes of letters to determine spacing between them.

- Contrast lettering color with background color. The best ink and paper combinations for reading are those which provide good contrast. Dark ink colors, particularly black, dark blue, and brown, on white or off-white paper are very legible. If photocopies of the material are sharp and clear, the contrast is good.
- Thin, dark lettering on a light background is best. If light-colored lettering on a dark background is used, the lettering should be a thicker typeface to facilitate reading.

### Tips On Visual Design

Every element of a publication's design should serve a purpose. Heading, visual devices, and spacing help to attract and keep the reader's attention, organize the information, and keep the "story" moving.

Visual devices draw the reader's attention to the most important places on a page. However, their overuse could be distracting.

- Use arrows, color, and other highlighting techniques to lead the reader's eye sequentially from one piece of information to the next.
- Box in concepts that belong together or stress common similarities or differences.

Spacing is important. Generally, the size of the page dictates an appropriate column width, typeface style and size, spacing between lines, and the placement of visuals. Maintaining consistency in spacing throughout your work is important.

Margins. If possible make margins wider at the bottom than at the top of the page and equalize side margins.

- Use an unjustified right margin. "Justifying" makes consistent spacing within and between words and can confuse an unskilled reader.

- 

- Justified

- 

- A justified right hand margin

- will have each line end at exactly

- 

- the same place on the right

- 

- margin and be the same length.

- 

- The spacing will be uneven between

- 

- words. Newspaper columns are

- 

- good examples of justified

- 

- margins.

- 

- 

- 

- Unjustified

- 

- An unjustified right hand margin will

- 

- have each line end at different

- 

- places on the right margin. Like

- 

- this example, each line will be

- 

- a different length. No irregularity

- 

- can be seen with the spacing between

- 

- words.

-



Columns. Use narrow columns, such as this one. They are easier to read. A 40-45 character column is recommended.

Paragraphs. When paragraphs are short, do not indent. When text is complex, start each sentence of a paragraph on a new line. Double space between paragraphs; single space between a heading and the first paragraph.

Words. Avoid putting the first word of a sentence as the last word on a line.

## **Pretesting Before Production**

Pretesting allows an opportunity to evaluate and reassess the material for appropriateness with the target audience. There are two good pretesting resources described in the Readability Formulas section on page 16. Additional materials may be available at your local library.

Results of a pretest should give feedback on five basic components of effective communication: attractiveness, comprehension, acceptability, self-involvement, and persuasion.

- Attractiveness is visual appeal. Its role is to motivate readers to pick up the material and read it. Visual appeal includes elements such as:
  - Overall design -Title -Color -Illustrations
- Comprehension is how well the ideas are understood and retained. Elements that affect comprehension include:
  - Repetition of key words or concepts
  - Sentence structure
  - Word usage
  - Highlighting techniques
  - Appropriate reading level

One element the writer cannot control, but which strongly influences comprehension, is the extent to which a reader's background knowledge and experiences can be applied to make the material meaningful.

- Acceptability is a condition (state) of favorable approval or belief. Some elements that make written materials acceptable include:
  - Culturally appropriate illustrations and words
  - Credibility of the author
  - Legibility of typeface
- Self-involvement is the degree to which readers can apply what they read to their own life style. Elements that contribute to self-involvement are:

- Action-oriented illustrations that incorporate the reader's point of view
  - Text with personal references
  - Words common to the reader's vocabulary.
- Persuasion is the ability to convince the reader to undertake a desired behavior or accept new information. Persuasion can be achieved through:
    - Identifying and presenting topics relative to the reader's concerns.
    - Logically sequencing information.
    - Being a credible author in the eyes of the reader or quoting a well known, reliable source.

## Checklist For Written Materials

Check how your materials meet some of the basic techniques on writing for adults with limited reading skills.

- Need for information is established.
- Information is useful without being extraneous.
- Target Audience is identified. Its characteristics are understood and not forgotten as the primary receiver of the information.
- Audience is made to feel personally involved and motivated to read the material.
- Sentences are simple, short, specific, and mostly in the active voice.
- Each idea is clear, logically sequenced, and limited to one page or two pages, face to face. Important points are highlighted and summarized.
- Illustrations are relevant to text, meaningful to the audience, and appropriately located.
- Words are familiar to the reader. Any new words are clearly defined. None, or very few, are three syllables or more.
- Readability level is determined to be close to 5th grade level.
- Layout balances white space with words and illustrations.

High frequency words that make up about 60% of written language.

a country hard made parts think year

about \* has make people this years

above have man picture those you

across day he many place thought your

after days head may put three \*

again did help me \* through

air different her men time

all do here might read times

almost does high more right to

along don't him most \* today

also down his mother together

always during home mr. said too

an \* house much same took

and how must saw two

animals each however my say \*

another earth \* \* school

any end second under

are enough I name see until

around even if near sentence up

as ever important need set us

asked every in never she use

at eyes into new should used

away \* is next show \*

\* it night side

far its no since want

back father \* not small was

be feet now so water

because few just number some way

been find \* \* something we

before first sometimes well

began following keep of soon went

being food kind off sound were

below for know often still what

best form \* old story when

better found on study where

between four land once such which

big from large one \* while

both \* last only white

boy left or take who

boys get let other tell why

but give life others than will

by go light our that with

\* going like out the without

good line over their words

called got little own them work  
came great live \* then works  
can \* long there world  
children look page these would  
come had looked paper they write  
could hand \* part things \*

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"Word Frequency Book" by John B. Carroll, Peter Davies, and Barry Richman, Houghton Mifflin Co. and American Heritage Publishing Co., 1971.

### Readability Formulas

A readability formula is a mathematically-obtained rating of the grade reading level of written materials. The vocabulary, sentence structure, and word density are the components of your material that influence its readability. In general, as sentences become shorter and less complex and words become simpler (i.e., two syllables or less), the reading level of the material goes down.

If the reading level of your audience is unknown, then it is probably best to keep the reading level at the 5th or 6th grade level and thus useful to most people.

The two most frequently used readability formulas are the "Fry Graph Reading Level Index" and the "SMOG Readability Formula." Both tests are quick but useful tools to help writers determine the level of difficulty of written materials. However, there are limitations to their application. First, the tests do not take into consideration the characteristics of a reader's skill. Everyone's reading ability will vary depending on their interest and prior knowledge about a subject. Also the tests cannot measure the conceptual difficulty or complexity of written materials that result from the writer's presentation and organization of subject matter. It is up to the writer to know and understand the reading audience well enough to apply basic writing skills, to maximize the comprehension of the message, and to make it meaningful to the audience.

Test your materials with both the Smog and Fry readability tests. Together they can give you an estimate of the reading difficulty.

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Test your materials with both the SMOG and Fry Readability Tests. Together they can give you an estimate of the reading difficulty.

## "Fry Graph Reading Level Index" (1)

The Fry Graph method for determining the reading level of written materials is based on three 100-word passages. If your materials are shorter, you may need to modify the recommended number of words and sentences to use this index. For shorter materials the "SMOG Readability Formula" may be appropriate.

### Steps to using the Fry Graph:

1. Select a total of three 100-word passages, one each from the beginning, middle, and end of the material. Skip all proper nouns.
2. Count the total number of sentences in each 100-word passage (estimating to the nearest tenth of a sentence). Average these three numbers (add together and divide by three).
3. Count the total number of syllables in each 100-word passage. There is a syllable for each vowel sound, for example: cat (1), blackbird (2), continental(4). (For convenience you may count every syllable over one in each word and add 100). Average the total number of syllables for the three samples.
4. Plot on the Fry Graph the average number of sentences per 100 words and the average number of syllables per 100 words. Most plot points fall near the heavy curved line. Perpendicular lines mark off approximate grade level areas.

Replication of the Fry Graph did not lend it self to the on-line format. For more information please see Author's note below.

5. After plotting these averages on the graph, we find they fall in the fifth grade area. If great variability is encountered either in sentence length or in the syllable count for the three selections, then randomly select several more passages and average them in before plotting.

(1) Edward Fry, "Readability Formula That Saves Time," "Journal of Reading", Vol. II, No. 7 (April 1986), p. 512-516, 575-578.

Author's Note: A Fry Readability Scale can be purchased for \$3.00 each plus a postage and handling fee from: Fry Readability Scale, Jamestown Publishing, PO Box 6743, Providence, RI 02940. For orders sent by fourth class mail: \$1.00 minimum charge plus 5% for postage and handling; orders sent by UPS: \$2.25 minimum charge plus 10%.

## FRY Grading

Edward Fry (1968, 1977) developed a quick, easy, usable technique for estimating the reading difficulty of written material for grade one through graduate school. The graph uses the traditional factors of sentence length (located on either side) and total number of syllables (located along the top and bottom of the graph).

### Directions:

1. Randomly select three (3) sample passages and count out exactly 100 words in each passage. Begin with the beginning of a sentence and count proper nouns, initializations and numerals. Choose one passage from the beginning, middle, and end of the book. Omit front and end matter.

2. Count the number of sentences in the one hundred words, estimating length of the fraction of the last sentence to the nearest one-tenth. For example, if your last word is the 4th word in a sentence of eight words you would calculate thusly:

4 (The last 4 of your 100 words are in a sentence of 8 words)

8 (The # of words in the sentences which contain the last words of your 100 words)

The fraction  $4/8 = .5$ . Your fraction of a sentence is .5.

3. Count the total number of syllables in each 100-word passage.

4. Plot on the graph the following:

1) average syllables (add total number of syllables for three passages and divide by three)

2) average sentences (add total number of sentences for three passages and divide by three).

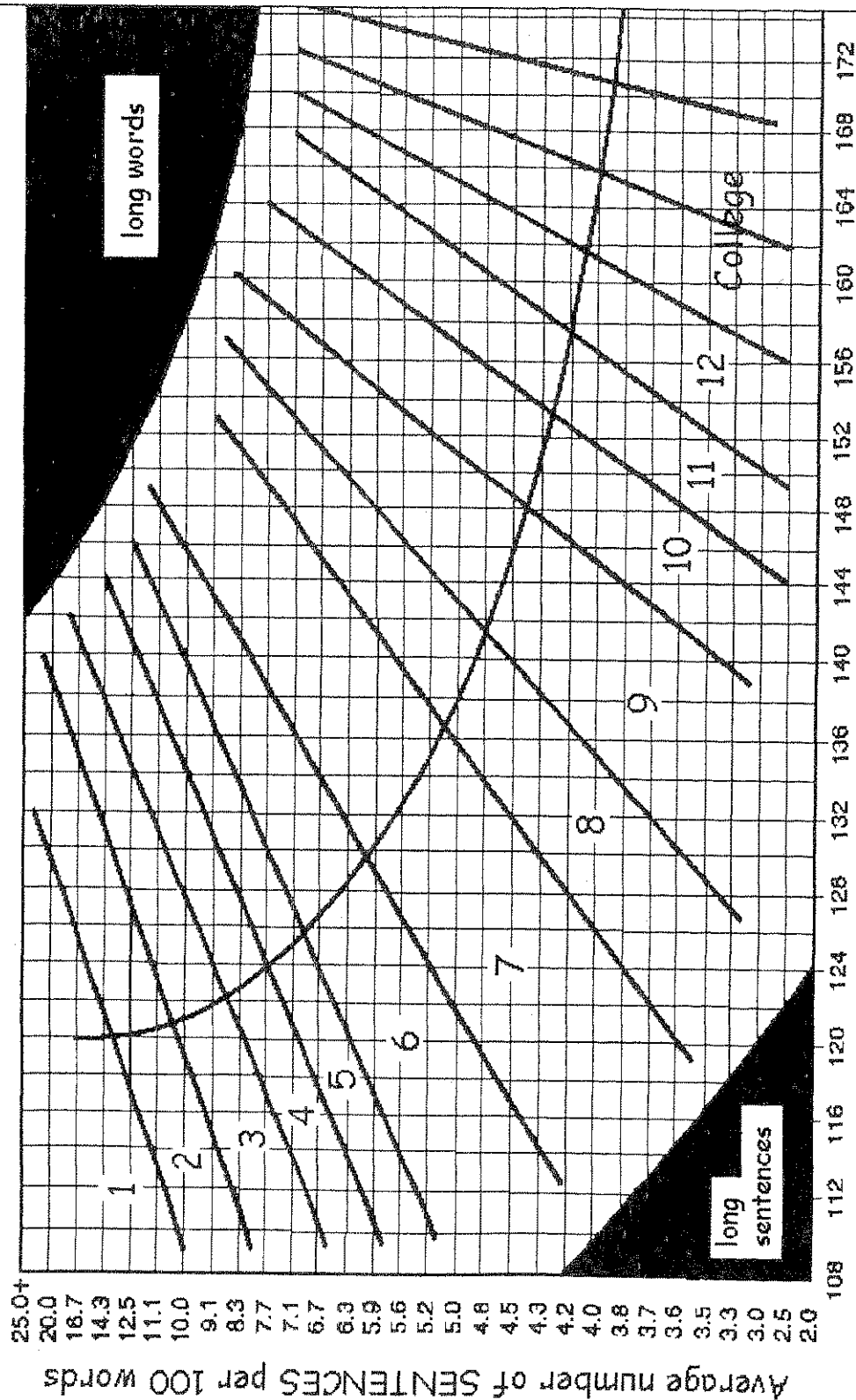
Plot dot where the two lines intersect. Grade equivalent area is the space found between the diagonal lines. Your dot will fall between the diagonal lines and will show you the approximate grade level.

### Definitions:

1.) A word is defined as a group of symbols with a space on either side: thus, JOE, IRA, 1945, and & are each one word.



# Fry Graph for estimating Reading Ages (grade level)



Average number of SYLLABLES per 100 words

### When using the SMOG formula:

- A sentence is defined as a string of words punctuated with a period, an exclamation mark, or a question mark. Consider long sentences with a semi-colon as two sentences.
- Hyphenated words are considered as one word.
- Numbers which are written out should be counted. If written in numeric form, they should be pronounced to determine if they are polysyllabic.
- Proper nouns, if polysyllabic, should be counted.
- Abbreviations should be read as though unabbreviated to determine if they are polysyllabic. However, abbreviations should be avoided unless commonly known.

### Example using the SMOG Readability Formula:

The example is from a pamphlet produced by La Leche League (Oct. 1982).

Three passages of 10 sentences (numbered) each and the polysyllabic words (ALL CAPS) in them have been counted. There are 29 polysyllabic words in the total 30 sentences. According to the SMOG Conversion Table, the approximate grade level is 8th.

1.) Right after baby is born, begin BREASTFEEDING-the sooner the better. 2.) The early milk will give baby extra PROTECTION against sickness. 3.) And baby's nursing will get you back into shape quicker.

4.) While you're at home, you can be with your baby, loving and nursing him, to your heart's content. 5.) Many little babies want to nurse every couple of hours. 6.) This frequent nursing brings in the milk. 7.) It's so easy, and you enjoy baby so much and feel so close to him, you'll hardly notice how many times you are feeding him.

8.) Try to have at least six to eight weeks at home to rest and give baby a good start before you go back to your job. 9.) Some mothers have to go back sooner, but they ask for the shortest hours POSSIBLE.

10.) Night feedings are EASIER when you're BREASTFEEDING. When baby wakes at night, just take him in bed with you to nurse. The nighttime nursing helps keep up your milk supply, and baby and you both enjoy the nursing and cuddling and drifting off to sleep together.

1.) As soon as POSSIBLE after baby is born, learn how to express milk from your breasts. 2.) A nurse in the HOSPITAL or clinic, or ANOTHER nursing mother, may be able to show you how this is done. 3.) There's also a section about EXPRESSING and storing mother's milk in the MANUAL "The WOMANLY Art of BREASTFEEDING."

4.) After you are back on the job, you can express milk on your coffee break and lunch hour to take care of the fullness in your breasts. 5.) The next day you can leave this milk in a bottle to be given to baby.

5.) The milk you express will have to be kept cold, of course. 6.) If there's a CAFETERIA in the office or FACTORY where you work, you can ask the manager for a little space on a REFRIGERATOR shelf. 7.) Or you can bring a large thermos jug filled with ice from home to keep your CONTAINER of milk in while you are at work and while CARRYING it home to put

in your REFRIGERATOR. 8.) WHATEVER plan you work out, it will mean that baby can still have your good milk even when you aren't there. 9.) And you'll be more COMFORTABLE too.

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4.) No amount of money can buy the many good things that come with BREASTFEEDING. 5.) No FORMULA can compare with mother's milk. 6.) A baby on breast milk has fewer stomach upsets and DIARRHEA. 7.) But the main thing is baby's HAPPINESS. 8.) You just won't believe what this EXTRA-SPECIAL MOTHERING will mean to him.

9.) So give BREASTFEEDING a try, taking things a day at a time. 10.) If you have any questions - most of us do when we're starting out - ask a friend who is HAPPILY nursing her own baby. The mothers of La Leche League are friends who want to help you breastfeed. Call or write us!

McLaughlin, G. Harry. "SMOG Grading: A New Readability Formula." "Journal of Reading", Vol. 12, No. 8 (May 1969), p. 639-46.

Table developed by: Harold C. McGraw, Office of Educational Research, Baltimore County Schools, Towson, MD.

## SMOG Readability Formula

The SMOG formula is useful for shorter materials. To calculate the SMOG reading level, begin with the entire written work that is being assessed and follow these steps:

1. Count off 10 consecutive sentences near the beginning, in the middle, and near the end of the text. If the text has fewer than 30 sentences, use as many as are provided.
2. Count the number of words containing 3 or more syllables (polysyllabic) including repetitions of the same words.
3. Look up the approximate grade level on the SMOG Conversion Table (3):

| Total Polysyllabic | Approx. Grade Level |
|--------------------|---------------------|
| Word Count         | (+1.5 Grades)       |
| 0-2                | 4                   |
| 3-6                | 5                   |
| 7-12               | 6                   |
| 13-20              | 7                   |
| 21-30              | 8                   |
| 31-42              | 9                   |
| 43-55              | 10                  |
| 57-72              | 11                  |
| 73-90              | 12                  |
| 91-110             | 13                  |
| 111-132            | 14                  |
| 133-156            | 15                  |
| 157-182            | 16                  |
| 183-210            | 17                  |
| 211-240            | 18                  |

## "SMOG Readability Formula" (2)

The SMOG formula is useful for shorter materials. To calculate the SMOG reading level, begin with the entire written work that is being assessed and follow these steps:

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3. Look up the approximate grade level on the SMOG Conversion Table (3):

4.

|                       |                     |
|-----------------------|---------------------|
| 5. Total Polysyllabic | Approx. Grade Level |
|-----------------------|---------------------|

|    |            |               |
|----|------------|---------------|
| 6. |            |               |
| 7. | Word Count | (+1.5 Grades) |

|    |     |   |
|----|-----|---|
| 8. |     |   |
| 9. | 0-2 | 4 |

|     |     |   |
|-----|-----|---|
| 10. |     |   |
| 11. | 3-6 | 5 |

|     |      |   |
|-----|------|---|
| 12. |      |   |
| 13. | 7-12 | 6 |

|     |      |   |
|-----|------|---|
| 14. |      |   |
| 15. | 3-20 | 7 |

|     |       |   |
|-----|-------|---|
| 16. |       |   |
| 17. | 21-30 | 8 |

|     |       |   |
|-----|-------|---|
| 18. |       |   |
| 19. | 31-42 | 9 |

|     |       |    |
|-----|-------|----|
| 20. |       |    |
| 21. | 43-55 | 10 |

|     |       |    |
|-----|-------|----|
| 22. |       |    |
| 23. | 57-72 | 11 |

|     |       |    |
|-----|-------|----|
| 24. |       |    |
| 25. | 73-90 | 12 |

|     |        |    |
|-----|--------|----|
| 26. |        |    |
| 27. | 91-110 | 13 |

|     |         |    |
|-----|---------|----|
| 28. |         |    |
| 29. | 111-132 | 14 |

|     |         |    |
|-----|---------|----|
| 30. |         |    |
| 31. | 133-156 | 15 |

|     |         |    |
|-----|---------|----|
| 32. |         |    |
| 33. | 157-182 | 16 |

|     |         |    |
|-----|---------|----|
| 34. |         |    |
| 35. | 183-210 | 17 |

|     |         |    |
|-----|---------|----|
| 36. |         |    |
| 37. | 211-240 | 18 |

|     |  |  |
|-----|--|--|
| 38. |  |  |
|-----|--|--|

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(2) McLaughlin, G. Harry. "SMOG Grading: A New Readability Formula." "Journal of Reading", Vol. 12, No. 8 (May 1969), p. 639-46.

(3) Table developed by: Harold C. McGraw, Office of Educational Research, Baltimore County Schools, Towson, MD.

## Selected References

The following selected references can provide additional information to help in developing materials for adults with limited reading skills:

### Readability Formula

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February 1988

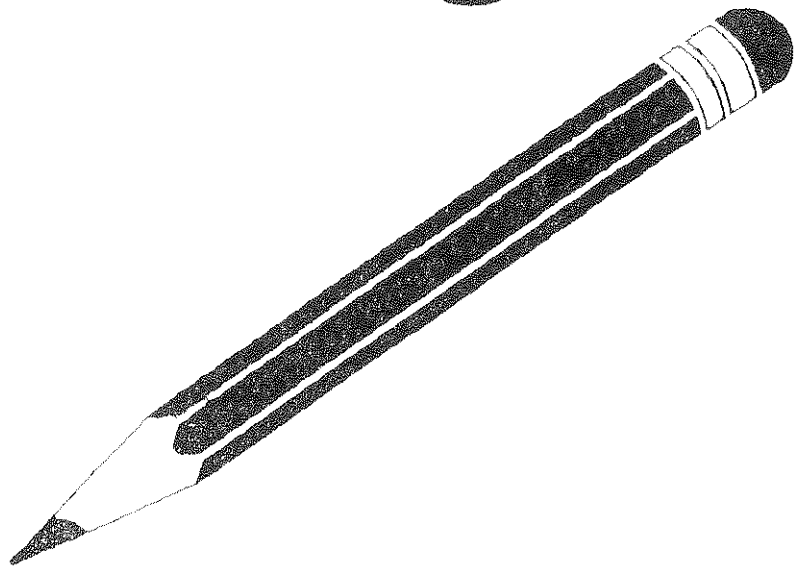
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Basic Sight Words  
Dolch Sight Words  
Dolch Word Phrases  
Fry Instant Words  
Fry Grading  
SMOG Formula



# Just Writing



# How to Write an Acrostic Poem

## The big idea

An acrostic poem is a way to show what you know about a character in a book you are reading. You might not think of it as poetry because it doesn't rhyme, but poetry doesn't always have to rhyme.

## Before you begin

Make a list of all the things you know about the character: his or her likes, dislikes, abilities, fears, and so on. Then think of an important scene where the character appears.

## How to do it

An acrostic poem is one where you choose a word or name (like the name of a character in a book) and use each letter in the name as the beginning of a word or line that tells something about that person or character.

## An example

Here's one about Wilbur, from *Charlotte's Web*.

In my acrostic poem, I have tried to show that I actually read the book by saying something about Wilbur that comes from the story itself.

When he found himself

In Zuckerman's barn,

Lying on a

Big pile of manure, he felt

Utterly lonely. He

Rolled over and cried.

# A poem about feelings

Name.....

*Think of things you have done that made you happy or sad. Then compare them with things that animals might have done.*

*For example - When I won the egg and spoon race*

*I was as happy as a monkey eating a banana*

When I \_\_\_\_\_

I was as happy as a \_\_\_\_\_

When I \_\_\_\_\_

I was as sad as \_\_\_\_\_

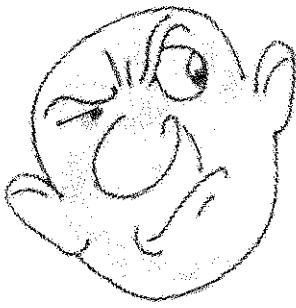
When I \_\_\_\_\_

I was as lonely as \_\_\_\_\_

*Here are some animals to help you.*

monkey snake lion cat elephant giraffe eagle leopard zebra donkey tiger duck  
grasshopper wasp ostrich camel tortoise pig butterfly cobra horse fish whale  
squirrel dinosaur duck dragon chimpanzee donkey dog wolf cat koala bear hippo  
rhino sparrow turkey rat mouse squirrel antelope  
lizard dolphin slug snail frog cheetah shark

*Now write it out as a poem*



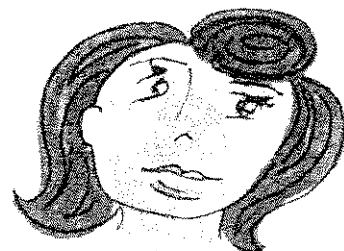
## Character Poems

by James Carter

**IMAGINE THIS:** "You are sitting on a train. You have a long journey ahead of you. To your delight you have managed to find a double seat. Just as the train pulls away, somebody takes your spare seat. You're annoyed. But your annoyance soon fades when you discover a few minutes into your journey that the person sitting next to you seems most upset."

**THINK:** Who is this person that is sitting next to you? Why is s/he upset? How would you describe him/her? Brainstorm as many things as you can about that person. Draw the person if you wish.

**THEN:** Write a poem in the voice of this person about a secret that they have kept for a long time.



# Writing the Autobiography

## Materials:

writing paper  
pencil  
computer (if available)  
autobiographical timeline  
auto-bio poem  
dictionary  
thesaurus

**Activity:** Now you are ready to write your autobiography. Use the timeline, auto-bio poem, and your creativity. Give it your best shot!

[http://esd.iu5.org/LessonPlans/autobiography/SP\\_autowriting14.htm](http://esd.iu5.org/LessonPlans/autobiography/SP_autowriting14.htm)

## Auto-Bio Poem

**Definition:** An auto-bio poem is an account of a person's life written by him/herself using an eleven-line poem format.

**Materials:**

paper/pencil

computer (if available)

**Activity:** Following the model below, create your own auto-bio poem.

**Model:**

Line 1: Your first name: Nancy

Line 2: Four descriptive traits: Honest, Caring, Curious, Energetic

Line 3: Sibling of ..... Sister of Kenneth

Line 4: Lover of (people, ideas) Laughter, Learning, Challenge

Line 5: Who feels.....Joy when traveling

Line 6: Who needs.....Sunshine everyday

Line 7: Who gives.....Friendship, encouragement, smiles

Line 8: Who fears.....Pain, hunger, and the end of summer

Line 9: Who would like to see..... Contentment for all living things

Line 10: Resident of (your city) Phoenix

Line 11: Your last name Haugen

**Resource:** [http://ericir.syr.edu/Virtual/Lessons/Lang\\_arts/Writing.comp/WCP0003.html](http://ericir.syr.edu/Virtual/Lessons/Lang_arts/Writing.comp/WCP0003.html)

## Autobiographical Timeline

An **autobiography** is an account of a person's life written by him/herself. Five things one needs to know in order write an autobiography are: character traits, family members, interests and accomplishments, goals, and address (city).

Materials needed:

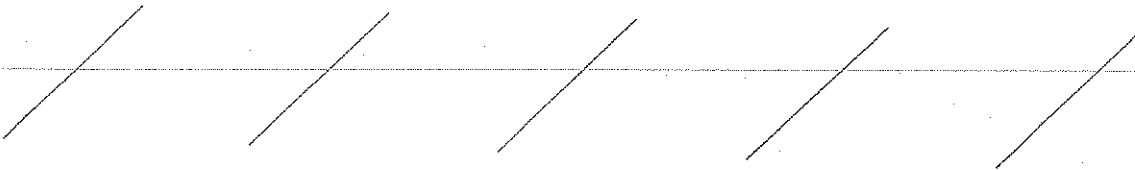
pencil

paper

list of personal events/dates

**Activity:** Create an autobiographic timeline. Start with the month, day and year of your birth. Include at least four more events. Have fun!

EVENT



DATE





# Character Poems

by James Carter

**IMAGINE THIS:** "You are sitting on a train. You have a long journey ahead of you. To your delight you have managed to find a double seat. Just as the train pulls away, somebody takes your spare seat. You're annoyed. But your annoyance soon fades when you discover a few minutes into your journey that the person sitting next to you seems most upset."

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**THEN:** Write a poem in the voice of this person about a secret that they have kept for a long time.

# A poem about feelings

Name.....

*Think of things you have done that made you happy or sad. Then compare them with things that animals might have done.*

*For example - When I won the egg and spoon race*

*I was as happy as a monkey eating a banana*

When I \_\_\_\_\_

I was as happy as a \_\_\_\_\_

When I \_\_\_\_\_

I was as sad as \_\_\_\_\_

When I \_\_\_\_\_

I was as lonely as \_\_\_\_\_

*Here are some animals to help you.*

monkey snake lion cat elephant giraffe eagle leopard zebra donkey tiger duck  
grasshopper wasp ostrich camel tortoise pig butterfly cobra horse fish whale  
squirrel dinosaur duck dragon chimpanzee donkey dog wolf cat koala bear hippo  
rhino sparrow turkey rat mouse squirrel antelope  
lizard dolphin slug snail frog cheetah shark

*Now write it out as a poem*

## 15 Sentence Portrait Assignment

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Follow directions exactly:

On the top line of a sheet of notebook paper, write the name of someone you have strong positive feelings about. The person can be someone living or dead, but it should be someone you know something about.

In the center of the third line, write the emotion or a color that you associate with this person. **This word will be the title of your portrait.** With the person in mind, write one sentence to complete each of the following. Do not number your sentences or write the questions. Just write what each asks in a sentence.

1. As your lead off sentence complete one of these statements:

- a. You stand there \_\_\_\_\_
- b. No one is her \_\_\_\_\_
- c. In this memory (or photo, dream, etc) you are \_\_\_\_\_
- d. I think sometimes \_\_\_\_\_
- e. The (your) face is \_\_\_\_\_
- f. We had been \_\_\_\_\_

- 2. Write a sentence using a color.
- 3. Using a body part.
- 4. Using a simile.
- 5. Write a sentence of 25 words
- 6. Write a sentence of less than eight words.
- 7. Write a sentence naming a piece of clothing.
- 8. Name a wish you would like to tell this person.
- 9. Use an animal in a sentence
- 10. Use three or more alliterative words in a sentence
- 11. Write a sentence with two commas.
- 12. Use a smell and color in a sentence.
- 13. Use a simile.
- 14. Write an exclamatory sentence.
- 15. Use the title work again in a sentence.

When you have finished, you will have a sort of sentence poem/portrait about the person. You may leave it as it is or rewrite it using only the ideas you like in another arrangement, a poem, an essay, story.

# Dear Diary,

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

## **Descriptive Prompts for Elementary, Middle and High Schools**

1. Describe a place you always wanted to visit.
2. Describe the most beautiful scene in nature that you can imagine.
3. Describe a kitchen that you have seen or would love to see.
4. Describe the ocean. Think about what it looks like on and below the surface.
5. Describe a storm. This could be a thunder storm, a snow storm, a hurricane, a tornado, a hail storm, a rain storm, or any type of storm.
6. Describe a place where you feel safe and protected.
7. Describe a toy you love(d). Think of all its good points.
8. Describe your ideal playground.
9. Describe the perfect shopping mall.
10. Describe a place where people congregate (like a zoo, a church, a circus, etc.)
11. Describe your bedroom the way you want it to be.
12. Describe your favorite dessert (or food).
13. Describe a beach (a desert, a mountain, a city, or a plain).
14. Think of your favorite animal and describe that animal.
15. Describe your best friend so that the reader can picture him or her.

16. Think of your favorite place. What do you like about this place? What do you do there? How does it look, smell, and feel? Now write an essay describing your favorite place so that your reader will be able to picture it.
17. Some people prefer dogs as pets, some like cats, and others prefer birds, snakes, fish, rabbits, pigs, horses, and other animals. What is your perfect pet? What does it look like? Is it soft or hard? Does it make any sounds? Now describe your idea of a perfect pet so that your reader can picture it.
18. Different teachers decorate their classes in different manners. Think of your idea of the perfect classroom. Is it colorful? Does it have desks or tables? What does it look like? How does it smell? Are there any sounds in it? Write an essay describing your idea of the perfect classroom.
19. Each season of the year is beautiful in some way. Think of which season is your favorite: winter, summer, spring or fall. Think of what your town looks like during that season. What does it feel like? Is there a smell or taste to it? Now write an essay describing an outdoor scene during your favorite season of the year.
20. Everyone has a favorite object that they treasure. Think of some object in your room that you really like. It could be a toy, or a doll, a game, a stuffed animal, or a book, but whatever it is, it is special to you. What does it look, feel, smell, and sound like? Now, describe this object to your reader so that he or she will be able to picture it clearly.
21. Every person has a favorite place to play. Think of your favorite place to play. It may be your backyard, or a playground, or a nearby woods, or an open field. What does this place look like? What are the sounds you hear there? What does it feel and smell like? Describe your favorite place to play so that your reader can see it without being there.



22. Almost all houses have kitchens. Some are big and some are tiny. Think of the kitchen at your home. Think of how you might change it to make it even better. What is in it? What does it smell like? Now, describe this perfect kitchen to your reader so that he or she can see it clearly.
23. There are trees everywhere, even in the middle of big cities. Think of a tree you have seen. What does it look, feel, and sound like? Describe that tree so that your reader can picture it too.
24. People gather at places like malls, fairgrounds, schools, gymnasiums, sports fields and swimming pools. Think of a place in your town where there are lots of people. How does it look, sound, smell, and feel to be there? Now, describe that crowded place so that your reader can feel as if he or she is there.
25. Every child enjoys playing on a playground. Think of the playgrounds you have played in. Think of what makes them better. Maybe you've already seen it, but think of what makes the perfect playground. Think of how it looks, sounds, feels, and smells. Now, describe your idea of a perfect playground so that your reader can see it clearly.
26. Even in the desert it rains sometimes. Think of what the world looks like outside your window when it rains. Think about how it looks, smells, and feels. What sounds do you hear? What does rain taste like? Describe what the world looks like outside a window when it rains.
27. Flowers always make a yard or a room look very pretty. Think of a garden or a bunch of flowers you have seen. Make it even better and prettier in your mind. What does it look and feel like? Does it smell? Describe the garden or a bunch of flowers so that your reader can see it and smell it in his or her mind.
28. Cities and towns have lots of things going on in them, lots of stores, traffic, people, churches, schools, parks, and maybe even a zoo. Think of your city or a city you have visited. As you walk down the sidewalk in the middle of that city, what do you see, hear, smell, taste, and



feel? Describe that city for your reader and what it is like to be there.

29. Even in big cities, there are parks where there are woods. There are woods everywhere in this big country of ours. Think of a woods you have been in or played in. What does it look like? Now describe this woods so that the reader can see it.
30. Alice visits Wonderland in *Alice in Wonderland*. Wonderland is the land of her dreams. What is the ideal place for you? What place do you dream about? What does it look like? Does it have a smell? How does it feel? Do you hear sounds there? Describe the ideal place of your dreams in such a way that the reader can picture it, too.
31. We all eat to stay alive, but everyone has a favorite food. What is your favorite food in the world? What does it look like? How does it smell and taste in your mouth? Describe your favorite food so that your reader can see it and almost taste it as well.
32. Many people love the beach and others love the mountains for a vacation. Which do you like better; the beach or the mountains? Even if you have never been to either, you have seen pictures. Choose one—either a beach or the mountains. What does the place look like? Does the place have a feel to it? What smells are there? What sounds do you hear? Describe your beach or mountains so that your reader can picture the scene you see in your mind.
33. Everyone has a favorite game, dominoes, checkers, cards, *Clue*, *Chutes and Ladders*, *Monopoly*, and so on. What is your favorite game? What does it look like when you play? What sounds do you hear as you play? Describe your favorite game so that the reader can see it and hear the action as you play.



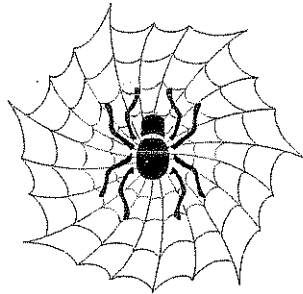


34. Everyone has to shop for food or clothes sometime. Think of a store to which you like to go. What does it look like inside the store? Are there sounds? What do things feel like there? Does the store have a smell? Write a description of a store you like to visit so that your reader can feel as if he or she were there.
35. People live in houses, apartments, tents, cabins, trailers, and other buildings. Where do you live? Think of your ideal living place. Perhaps it's where you live now. What does it look like? Does it have a smell? Describe your ideal living place or the place where you live so that your reader can picture it clearly.
36. Imagine that you were on a ship in the middle of the ocean. What does your ship look like? How does the ocean look? What does the sky look like above you? What do you see, hear, feel, smell, and taste as you look about? Describe your ship in the middle of an ocean of water.
37. Everyone has been in a thunder storm. Think back to when you last experienced a thunder storm. What was it like? What were the sights, sounds, smells, tastes, and feelings during the storm? Describe a thunder storm so that your reader can experience and picture it.
38. Imagine that someone gave you a very special ring. What does this ring look like as it sits on your finger? How does it feel? Is it heavy? Is there a taste to it? How does it sound if you rap it on the desk? Does it smell? Describe this ring down to the last detail so that your reader can picture it on your hand.
39. Our country has a flag with fifty stars representing the fifty states and thirteen stripes representing the thirteen colonies. Your state has a flag, too, with things that represent important historical events and items of your state. Imagine that you had a flag which represented you. What would it look like? How does it feel? Does it have a smell? Does it make a sound as it waves in the breeze? Think of some images it would have on it to represent you to the world.



Now, describe your personal flag so that your reader can see it clearly.

40. Almost everyone has had an encounter with a spider, has read the book *Charlotte's Web* and has seen pictures of spiders in their webs. Think of a spider and web you have seen. It could have been real, in a book, or in your imagination. What do this spider and web look like? Do they make a sound? What do they feel like if you touch them? Do they have a smell? Now, describe your spider and its web so vividly that your reader can see it as if it were right in front of him or her.



## Expository/Clarification Prompts for Elementary, Middle and High Schools

1. Write about what you think the world will be like in 100 years.
2. We are learning all the time. Write about something you have learned recently and how it has affected you.
3. You have been asked by your principal to recommend one course which will help you prepare for the job you want in the future. It could be a course your school is already offering or a new course. Write an essay to explain to your principal the course you would recommend. Be sure to give the reasons for your suggestion.
4. Explain the main reasons why you think students drop out of school.
5. Talk about your favorite music and why you like it.
6. Think of your favorite year in school. Explain why it was your favorite year.
7. Friends are important, but everyone has a different opinion of what makes a good friend. Explain what, in your opinion, makes a good friend.



8. Some teachers are special. Without giving any names, explain why one particular teacher in your life was special.
9. If you could change one thing about your school, what would you change? Explain why.
10. We all get angry at times, but different people react in different ways. Some people show their anger openly, and some hide it within themselves. Explain and describe what you do when you get mad.
11. Friends sometimes experience conflicts. Explain why this happens.
12. If someone were new to your town, explain to him/her the highlights.
13. If you could make changes to your school lunchroom, what would you do?
14. Most people like one particular animal more than others. Explain why your favorite animal is your favorite animal.
15. Most people remember one day that really was special. Think about a special day you have had and write an essay explaining why that day was so special.
16. Your generation faces many problems. Identify one of these problems that you feel is the most important, explain it, and propose some possible solutions to the problem.
17. Much has been written about the negative effects of television on young people. Are all television shows bad for children? Write an essay describing a show you feel has a positive impact on today's teens and explain how the show could be helpful.
18. Rules are important in our daily lives. We have rules for driving, rules for studying, and even rules for playing. Think about the rules you have in your school. What three rules should every school have? Write an essay explaining to the reader the three rules you selected.



Give clear reasons why each one is needed.

19. Games are fun and often teach us something as well. Think about your favorite game. Write a paper telling about your favorite game. Explain to the reader your reasons for enjoying it.
20. Suppose you have been appointed to a neighborhood improvement committee. You must make recommendations on ways to make your neighborhood a better place to live. Think about some changes you would like to make in your neighborhood. Write an essay to inform your reader of changes you would recommend to improve your neighborhood and why these changes are important.
21. If you could choose any animal for a class pet, what would you choose and why?
22. What is your favorite time of the year? Explain why this is your favorite time.
23. Everyone has something or someone that is important to him/her. Pick an object, a person, or a feeling that is important to you and explain why it is so important in your life.
24. Eating healthy foods is very important. Write an essay explaining why it is important to eat healthy foods.
25. Explain why it is important to learn to read.
26. Think back to when you were little and had a favorite toy. Explain why you liked this particular toy.
27. Everyone has chores to do. Explain why you do the job or chore you have.
28. If you could be any other person for a day, who would you be? Explain why you would like to be that person for a day.

29. We are increasingly worried about our environment. Write an essay explaining about one environmental problem you think is important and propose some possible solutions to the problem.
30. Suggest one change that you think can make this country better.
31. If you had a time machine and could go to any time in the past or future, where you go? Explain why you chose that particular time.
32. Everyone has responsibilities. Write a paper explaining a responsibility you have now or will have in the future and why you shoulder that responsibility.
33. Write an essay explaining whether you prefer a big city or small town in which to live and why you prefer it.
34. Your class is making a box to be seen in 2096. Write an essay explaining the one thing you put in that box and why.
35. Think of your favorite year in school. Now write an essay explaining why it was your favorite year.

*Note: An attempt has been made to phrase the last thirty prompts as they might appear on the test. Use them as you see fit. In many states, on the actual test, these prompts would be divided into three separate paragraphs. In the interest of space, I have omitted these separations and have written each prompt as one paragraph. Write them for your students the way they might appear on your state writing test.*

36. Most adults in this world have a job of some sort. Think of the ideal job for you when you complete your schooling. Now, think of some reasons why this would be your ideal job. Write an essay to explain why this is your ideal job.
37. Schools do not offer all the elective courses (like art and music) that students would like to take. Think of one elective course you want to take that your school does not offer at this time. Think of some reasons why you think this course should be offered. Now, write an



essay explaining why you think that this particular elective should be offered in your high school.

38. Everyone has a book that he or she enjoyed reading, whether it be a book recently read or one read as a small child. Think of one book you have read that you really enjoyed. Maybe it was your favorite book when you were little. Maybe it's one you read recently. Think of some reasons why you liked that book. Now, write an essay explaining why you really like your favorite book.
39. Many writers, scientists, and politicians have a view of what the world will be like 50 years from now. What do you think the world will be like by the time you are in your 60's? Think of the future and the direction you think the world is headed. Write an essay explaining what you believe the world will be like 50 years from now.
40. Many students drop out of school before they graduate from high school. Think of some reasons why you think these students do not finish high school. Now, write an essay explaining why you think students drop out of school.

Alternative for younger students:

Many students do not do their work in school and then later often quit school before they graduate. Think of some reasons why you think these students do not do their work and get bad grades. Now, write an essay explaining why you think these students do not work in school and often quit school before graduating.

41. High school English classes require students to read Shakespeare and other classics. Some students object to this practice. Think of some reasons why you think the state requires that Shakespeare and the classics be taught in high school English. Now, write an essay explaining why you think Shakespeare and the classics are required.



Alternative for younger students:

In school, students must read classic books that the teacher picks. Some students do not like to be told what to read. They would rather pick their own books. Think of some reasons why your teachers require these classic books that are so famous. Think of some that your teacher has read to you or that you have read yourself. Now, write an essay explaining why you think the teachers insist that students read and listen to the famous classics.

42. Imagine that time travel to the past was possible. Think of where and when you would like to go for a visit. Write an essay telling where and when you would go in the past and explain why you choose to go there.
43. Imagine that you had no TV or radio for one week. Think of some activities that you can do instead to keep you busy and out of trouble. Write an essay to explain what you can do to keep occupied in a week of no TV or radio.

Or, alternatively, if your students are having trouble with this type of essay:

Imagine that you had no TV or radio for one week. Think of one activity that you would like to do instead to keep you busy and out of trouble. Write an essay explaining one activity to replace the TV and radio for that week.

44. Teenagers (children) are faced with many problems today. School, home, society, peers all complicate your lives. Think of one problem that really bothers you. Now, think of some solutions to that problem that might make it easier to bear. Write an essay offering solutions to your worst problem.
45. Many teenagers (children) complain that adults expect too much of them. Many adults think that teenagers (children) do not help out enough at home, at school, or in society doing volunteer work. What do you think? Do adults expect too much of you? Think of some reasons to support your answer. Now, write an essay explaining whether or not you think adults expect too much of you.



46. Each year many teenagers are killed by driving under the influence of alcohol or by being in a car driven by another teen who has had too much alcohol. How can the number of alcohol-related deaths be reduced? Think of some solutions you and your friends could implement to solve this problem. What do you think would work to reduce the deaths? Now, write an essay proposing some solutions to help stop teenagers from risking their lives and driving under the influence of alcohol.

Alternative for younger students:

Each year many teenagers are killed by driving under the influence of alcohol or by being in a car driven by another teen who has had too much alcohol. Think of what you and your friends, as younger persons who cannot yet drive, can do to keep your older brothers and sisters and friends from drinking and driving when drunk. Write an essay explaining your ideas to keep these teens out of the car if they drink.

47. Pollution, excessive garbage, toxic and industrial waste, using up non-replaceable resources are all problems facing our environment. Think of one particular environmental problem that you believe could be solved. Now think of some possible solutions to that problem. Write an essay proposing and explaining your solutions to the environmental problem you chose.
48. We all have a place where we can imagine or go where we relax, let our troubles disappear, and have a good time. For some it is a place far away, and for others it is a place close to home. Think of your favorite place where you can feel an escape from the hassles of your world, a place you love to be, your favorite place. Now, write an essay explaining why this place is your favorite.
49. Everyone has something they do to relax and have fun. Some like to read; others prefer sports; still others like to chat with friends. What is your favorite thing to do to relax and have fun? Think of why you enjoy this activity so much. Now, write an essay explaining why your favorite activity is your preferred way to relax and have fun.

50. In the past few years, there have been more and more incidents of violence reported on school campuses. In fact, there have been many reports of violence even at the kindergarten level! What do you think is the cause of this rise in violence? Think of some possible reasons. Write an essay explaining why you think there have been more incidents of violence in schools in recent years.
51. By the time we reach high school, at least one teacher has made an impact in our lives. Think of a teacher you have had who influenced you and really helped you to learn and to mature. Think of some reasons why this teacher made such a positive impact on your life. Now, without mentioning the teacher's name (use Mr. or Ms. X), explain why this teacher has had such a positive influence in your life.
52. Many kids hear their parents and grandparents talk about "the good old days." Is this just a figment (imaginary thought) in older people's minds as they remember their youth? Was life really better twenty or forty years ago? What do you think of this statement? Is life for teens harder now or when your parents and grandparents were young? Now, write an essay explaining your answer to this question.
53. Philosophers have written books and books about the meaning of life. Each one is different. What is your philosophy of life? What is life all about? Decide what you think are the most important elements that make us human, that are the ideas (philosophies) of the way you run your life. Write an essay explaining your philosophy of life.

Alternative for younger students:

There are many books that talk about the meaning of life. Your teacher talks about living a "good" life. What do you think are the most important things to remember to follow in the years to come? What do you think are the most important things to do in your life that will lead to your happiness? Now, write an essay explaining what will make life good and meaningful for you.

54. We all have different personalities, different ways of dealing with life, different points of view. What are the main elements of your

personality? What kind of a person are you? What are you *really* like inside? Write an essay explaining your personality to your reader.

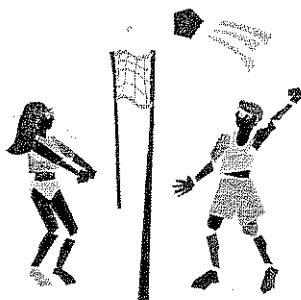
55. Life is filled with conflicts, conflicts of interest, conflicts of opinion, conflicts of life styles, etc. Most good novels have some sort of conflict in them to add to the interest. Resolving that conflict is what the novel is about. Think about some of the conflicts in your life. Now think how you resolve those conflicts. Write an essay to explain how you usually resolve conflicts. What is your method?
56. Everyone, no matter how young, has a year in his or her life that was not so good. Think of the worst year of your life. Think of reasons why it was your worst year. Write an essay explaining why that particular year was the worst year of your life.

Or conversely

57. Your school (the United States, your state, etc.) is not perfect. No matter how good something is, there are always ways to make it better. Think of one problem your school (the United States, your state, etc.) has that might be improved with some clever plans. Now, think of some solutions, some ways to make that improvement. Write an essay explaining your solutions to the problem.
58. Imagine that going to the future was possible. Think how far ahead into the future you would like to visit. Think about your reasons why you would like to choose that particular time. Write an essay telling how far into the future you would like to go and explain why you chose that particular time.
59. When we are young, we play games—board games, imaginary games, sports games. Think of some reasons why you really liked this game. Now, write an essay explaining why this game was your favorite as a younger child.
60. Medical studies have shown that exercise is a necessary part of our daily routine. What do you think? Do you exercise? Think about some reasons why you exercise. Exercising is important. Write an

essay why it is important to exercise regularly.

61. We consider certain people (real or made up) to be our heroes. Think about a real or made-up person and why he or she is your hero. Now write an essay explaining why that person is your hero.
62. Imagine if you could do anything you wanted for an entire week. Pick one thing you would like to do that week of freedom. Now write an essay to explain why you chose to do that one thing in a week in which you could have done anything you wanted.
63. You have been told for years by your parents and teachers to eat healthy foods instead of junk food. Think of some reasons why eating healthy foods is important. Now write an essay explaining why eating healthy foods is important.
64. At school, at work, and at play we have to work in teams in order to achieve our goals. Think of some attributes that make a good team player whether it be in a sport, at work, or at school when working in groups. Now write an essay to explain what makes a person a good team player.
65. Your parents and teachers insist that respect for others is very important. Think of some reasons why this might be important. Now write an essay explaining why respect for other people is important.



## **Narrative Prompts for Elementary, Middle, and High Schools**

1. Suppose you had invented a time machine. Write a story about what you did with it.
2. Write to tell of a day when you were the teacher. What did you do?
3. Write a story about trading places with your favorite TV, movie, or rock star.
4. One day a spaceship lands on the playground of your school . . .
5. Your shoe must have a story to tell. Tell it.
6. Your class grew plants as a science project. One day you looked at your plant and saw something really strange had grown there.
7. Write a story about what it would be like if you woke up one morning with wings.
8. On your birthday, a strange-looking lady came to your door and handed you a wrapped present. You rattled it. It made a noise. Write a story about this present.
9. Your teacher one day announced that your class was going on a wonderful field trip. Write a story about this field trip. In your story, you can have your class go anywhere you wish.
10. One day, as you were petting and talking to your friend's dog, it answered back! Write a story about this.
11. Write a story about yourself as a hero. What did you do to become a hero? Tell your story.

12. As you walked down the hallway at school, you heard some strange music coming from the custodian's closet. What was it? Write a story about it.
13. Tell a story about children who live in a world where there is no such thing as television, computers, or electronic games.
14. A distant relative bequeathed you a strange ring. As you put this ring on, you discover that it has strange powers. What does it look like? What does it do? Tell a story about this ring.
15. Tell a story about your ideal place to live. What would it be like to live there?
16. (Used twice!) The teacher comes into the room and places a bag on her desk then leaves. The bag moves and wriggles. Write a story about what is in the paper bag.
17. Everyone has a day in his or her life that was extra special or dreams about what he or she would do on a special day. Write a story about a special day you have had or imagine you might have.
18. Every day you pass a door. It's always closed and locked. One day, as you pass, you notice that the door is open. You step inside. Write a story about what was on the other side of that door.
19. Tell a story about what happened when you traveled on a wagon pulled by horses.
20. Tell a story about a day in which everything went wrong.

*Note: An attempt has been made to phrase the last twenty-five prompts as they might appear on the test. In many states, on the actual test, these prompts would be divided into three separate paragraphs. In the interest of space, I have omitted these separations and have written each prompt as one paragraph. Write them for your students the way they might appear on your state writing test.*

21. Imagine you could travel to the future and live there. Think of what you think the future would be like. How different would it be from today? Now, write a story about living in the future.
22. Imagine you could go to any place you wanted for as long as you wanted any time you wanted. What place would you visit? Think about what you would do there. Write a story about a visit to a really neat place.
23. Pretend that you lived in colonial times. Think about what your life would be like, how it would be different living more than 200 years ago. Now, write a story about a young person (or yourself) living in George Washington's day.
24. Novels are fun to read because the action keeps you interested, and the characters almost become your friends. Think of a book you really liked. Imagine that you were a new character in this book. Write a story about what happened.

*Note: High school teachers might want to use a specific Shakespearean play or a specific piece of literature.*

25. Imagine you woke up one morning and found that you had switched places with a dog or a cat. Think what it would be like. What would you do? Write a story of your day as a dog or a cat.
26. What if you had a personal genie who would grant your every wish? What would your life be like? Think of some of the details. Write a story about having a personal genie.
27. Imagine you had a car that would take you anywhere you wanted to go for one day. Think of where you went in that car and what you did. Write a story about that day.

28. Everyone has a favorite season of the year. What is your favorite season? What do you like to do? Write a story about your favorite season.
29. Imagine one morning there's a knock at your front door. You open the door, and to your great surprise, you find an alien standing there. What do you do? What does it look like? Write a story about your encounter with this alien.
30. On your way to school one morning you see a huge truck speeding down the road. Suddenly, the back door of the truck opens and a large, mysterious box falls off the back of the truck. It sits there in the road. What is in the box? What do you do? Write a story about this mysterious box.
31. One spring day a skunk wanders into your classroom. What are the results? Write a story about the skunk that visited school.
32. Imagine you had a time machine that you could take only to the past. Where would you choose to go? Think of what you would do there, what it would be like. Write a story of your adventure in the past.
33. One day you are sitting under a large tree. An acorn hits you on the head, and you look up. There, on the branch above you sits a squirrel, laughing at you. The squirrel then looks you square in the eye, begins to talk to you, and asks you to return its acorn. What would you do? What would happen if you encountered a talking squirrel? Write a story about the experience.
34. Imagine a world where there was no money. What would people do? What would life be like? Write a story about living in a world without any money.
35. There are times when we all wish, even for just a moment, that we could be someone else for a day. Who would you choose to be for that day? What would you do? Think of some details of your day. Now write a story about what your day was like as that person.

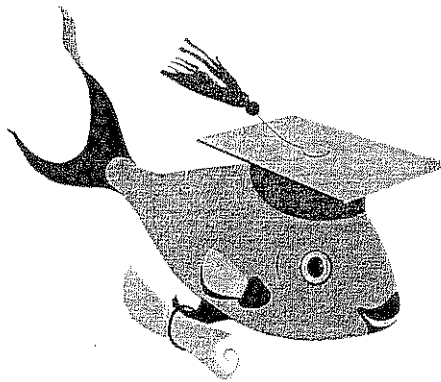




36. In a recent disaster, there were some kids who did some heroic things. Think what constitutes (makes) a hero. Imagine yourself as one. Now write a story in which you were a hero/heroine in a tough situation.
37. A little old lady gave you and a friend some magical glitter and told you to sprinkle it on your hair and something special would happen. What happened when you tried it? Write a story about this mysterious magical glitter.
38. One day you and your friends walked up to an old, seemingly abandoned house. You couldn't see inside due to the dust and cobwebs on the windows. You decide to see if the door is locked. You try the knob, and it turns. The door creaks open as if it has not opened in years . . . What happens next? What do you find? What do you and your friend do? Write a story about entering that old, seemingly abandoned house.
39. Love comes in all forms. We can love our parents, a boyfriend or girlfriend, a favorite pet, a brother or sister, a place, even a thing. Think about someone or something you love. Write a story about that person or thing that involves your feelings.
40. Imagine that your sense of smell was more highly developed than everyone else's. What experiences might you have? How might your life change? What would you be able to smell? Write a story about a person with a very highly developed sense of smell.
41. Imagine yourself temporarily lost in a foreign country where you do not know the language. How do you manage to communicate? What might happen to you? Write a story about a day you might have spent lost in a foreign country without knowing the language.
42. Imagine a city project to have every school student do some hours of community service as a part of the required curriculum. What would you choose to do? What do you think it would be like? What people might you meet? What would you be doing to help? Write a story

about your day of community service.

43. Sometimes family members or friends embarrass you when other people are around. Think of some times this has happened to you. Think of what could happen. Write a story about some embarrassing incident you might have had and how you coped with it.
44. Now and then you, without meaning to do so, break something that belongs to someone else. Think about what might be broken. Think about what might happen as a result. Now, write a story about accidentally breaking something that belonged to someone else and the story of what happened as a result.
45. One day your teacher must go home. Your teacher leaves, telling you that someone else will teach the class for the rest of the time. Who do you think will replace the teacher? What happens as a result? Write a story about a time your teacher had to go home, and someone else took over the class.



## 60 Persuasive Prompts for Elementary, Middle, and High Schools

1. Convince your parents to raise your allowance.
2. Should at least two years of foreign language classes be required for high-school graduation?
3. Should there be a dress code at your school?
4. Persuade your parents to listen to your favorite music.
5. Your principal has asked you to suggest one way of improving your school to make it a better place for students. Think about the changes that are needed at your school. Pick one change you feel would really make a difference. Write an essay to convince your principal that your idea is one that should be adopted.
6. Convince your teacher to read a favorite book of yours to the class.
7. Children watch too much television. Do you agree? Take a stand and support it. Convince your reader of your position.
8. Are part-time jobs for high school students a good thing or do they hinder getting an education? Take a stand.
9. Students are allowed to drop out of school at age 16. Should the state lower the school dropout age? Write an essay to support your view on the subject.
10. Should your school require uniforms? Convince your reader why or why not uniforms should or should not be required in your school.
11. Convince your parents to take you to a particular place.
12. Should gum chewing (use whatever is forbidden at your school) be allowed on the school campus?



13. Should community service be a requirement for graduation from high school?
14. Suppose you want a pet, and your parents are not sure you should have one. Think of the reasons for having a pet. Think of what you can say that would change your parents' minds. Write a paper to convince your parents to allow you to have a pet.
15. Persuade your mom to let you have your favorite food any time you want it.
16. Should the state legislature add ten days to the school year? Write to convince your reader of your side of the argument.
17. Should we do away with extra-curricular activities such as Art, P.E., and Music and go back to the basics, or are these classes necessary to a student's education?
18. Should homework be eliminated?
19. Considering the rights of non-smokers, write an essay about whether smoking should or should not be permitted in public places. Convince your reader of your position.
20. Should students be allowed to drop out of school?
21. If you could make a suggestion to change the school dress code, what one suggestion would you make? Now write to convince your reader to adopt your suggestion.
22. Your teacher has asked for suggestions on a place to visit for a field trip. Where would you like to go? Now write to convince your reader to adopt your suggestion.
23. We have rules everywhere. Argue to support the need to change a rule or situation that affects you.



24. Vandalism is becoming a problem in today's society. Do you think teenagers who vandalize should pay fines or serve mandatory community service to help repair the damage? Write an essay to convince your reader of your position.
25. Should students hold after-school jobs? Convince your reader of your point of view.

*Note: An attempt has been made to phrase the last thirty-five prompts as they might appear on the test. In many states, on the actual test, these prompts would be divided into three separate paragraphs. In the interest of space, I have omitted these separations and have written each prompt as one paragraph. Write them for your students the way they might appear on your state's writing test.*

26. Parents, courts, and cities often impose curfews on teenagers. What do you think of curfews? Are they helpful in saving lives and keeping teenagers out of trouble, or are they just another insult to responsible teenagers? Think of some arguments to support your opinion.

**Alternative for younger students:**

Most people make their children come in before dark. What do you think of this? Does having to come home early keep kids out of trouble, or are they just another insult to responsible kids? Think of some arguments to support your opinion. Now, write an essay to convince your reader of your opinion regarding requiring kids to be home after dark.

27. Many adults disagree whether sex education should be taught in the schools. What is your opinion on this matter? Should sex education be taught in the schools? Take a stand. Write an essay to convince your reader of your point of view on whether sex education should be taught in the schools or not.



### Alternative for younger students:

Some things are taught in school that students do not think should be taught. Think of one thing you are required to learn in school that you do not think should be included in the curriculum. Now, write an essay to convince your teachers to abandon that part of the curriculum.

28. The state writing assessment test puts pressure on students and their teachers. On the other hand, student writing all over the country has improved since this test has been implemented. What is your opinion on the matter? Should there be a state writing assessment test, or should this particular test be eliminated? Write an essay to convince your state of your opinion on whether there should (or should not) be a state writing assessment test.
29. Parents, schools, and society all impose rules, but schools especially have a set of rules that must be followed. Think of one school rule that you really dislike. Think of some arguments against having this rule at your school. Now, write an essay to convince your principal and teachers to abandon this particular rule.
30. Universities require that an entering freshman must have taken at least two years of a foreign language in high school in order to be considered for admission. Some teacher and politicians think that high schools should require two years of a foreign language for graduation. What do you think of this possible requirement? Should high schools require two years of studying a foreign language for graduation? There are many arguments for and against this. Write an essay to convince the powers-that-be whether or not two years of a foreign language should be a requirement for graduation from high school.

### Alternative for younger students:

Research has shown that the younger you are, the easier it is to learn a foreign language. Should we start requiring that students begin taking a foreign language in elementary school? Take a stand, and convince your

reader of your opinion on requiring foreign language in elementary school.

31. Most families assign chores to the children (teenagers). Most children (teens) object to having these chores imposed upon them. What is your opinion? Do you think that children should have assigned chores to do at home, or do you think you have enough to do already?
32. There is controversy (argument) going on in the country about requiring seat belts in school buses. What is your opinion? Should seat belts be required in all school buses? Write an essay to convince the powers-that-be of your opinion regarding the matter of whether seat belts should be required on school buses.
33. High schools do not offer all the elective courses that students would like to take. Think of an elective course you would like to take that your school does not offer at this time. Think of some reasons why you think this course should be offered. Now, write an essay to convince the administration at your high school to offer the course of your choice.

**Alternative for younger students:**

34. In Europe, the driving age is 18 because those governments feel that teens are not mature enough to handle the responsibility and the rules of driving in order to avoid accidents. In America, the driving age is still 16. Some people would like to raise the driving age in America to 18. What do you think? Should the driving age be raised to 18? Write an essay to convince the legislature of your position in the matter of raising the driving age to 18.
35. Most school systems have a separate school for pregnant teens to keep them away from other teens and to give them special classes to help them raise their babies. Do you think that pregnant teenagers should have to attend a special school, or do you think that they should be allowed to remain in their current school? Write an essay to convince your reader of your point of view. Should pregnant teenagers have to attend a special school?



**Alternative for younger students:**

Many school systems have special schools for students who misbehave all the time and disrupt the classroom so that little learning can take place. Do you think this is a good idea? What is your opinion? Write an essay to convince your school system of your point of view.

36. Many students object to the requirement of taking P.E., saying that it is not necessary. What do you think? Should physical education remain a required course at your school? Write an essay to convince your principal of your point of view.

*Note: You can substitute any unpopular course here. In my county, it would be Life Management Skills.*

37. American teenagers have argued that they drink anyway even though it is illegal for them to do so. Adults feel that they are too young to drink alcohol. Should the drinking age be lowered? What do you think about this? Think about some teens that you know. Think of some arguments to support your opinion. Now, write an essay to convince your reader of your opinion on whether the drinking age should be lowered or not.
38. In recent years, there has been much controversy over the previously solemn ritual of high school graduation. Students (and parents) at some graduation ceremonies have become rowdy and playful. What do you think of this? Should high school graduation continue to be the solemn occasion it has been in the past, or should students (and parents) be allowed to yell and "cut up" during the ceremony? Write an essay to convince your graduation committee of your opinion concerning the matter. Should graduation be a solemn occasion?

**Alternative for younger students:**

Some schools have graduation ceremonies in the fifth and eighth grade before students have completed their education. What do you think of this? Should students have graduation ceremonies before they finish all of their education or not? Think of some reasons to support your opinion. Now,





write an essay to convince the reader of your point of view.

39. You hear the older generation complaining that they wished they had watched what they ate when they were younger so they wouldn't have the health problems they have as older persons. What do you think of this? Should teens (children) watch what they eat? Should young people be health-conscious and eat healthily even though they have few health problems now? Write an essay to convince your reader on your point of view on whether or not children should watch their health through their choices in food.
40. Teachers and educational experts say that TV is rotting the mind of today's youth. They maintain that young people watch far too much television. Do you think this is true? Do you think that children watch too much television? Should parents restrict the number of hours their children watch? Write an essay to convince your parents of your point of view on this issue. Should parents limit your TV viewing?
41. Years ago, in some cities, there were separate public schools for girls and boys, especially at the high school level. Boys went to one school and girls went to another nearby, an entirely different school. Do you think this is a beneficial idea? Should boys and girls attend separate schools? Write an essay to persuade school officials whether or not they should separate boys and girls into different schools.
42. Most teens (children) complain that they get too little allowance. What do you think? Should you get more allowance? Think of some arguments to raise your allowance. Now, write an essay to the adults in your home to convince them to raise your allowance.
43. In many households where teens reside, possession of the family car is a conflict. How would you convince your parents to lend you the car? Think of some arguments you could use. Write an essay to convince the adults in your home to lend you the car whenever you want it.

**Alternative for younger students:**

In many households where there are children, there are many arguments over the use of the telephone. How would you convince your parents to get you a phone of your own? Think of some arguments you could use. Now, write an essay to convince your parents that you need a phone of your own.

*Note: If some of your students have no phone in their home, perhaps they could convince parents to buy an outfit or handheld video game that their parents could afford.*

44. Students complain about having too much homework. Do you think this is true? Do your teachers assign too much homework, or do they not give you enough for you to learn the subjects? Write an essay to convince your teachers either to give you more or less homework.
45. Test scores show that the United States is educationally behind other developed countries in Europe and Asia. We need to take a course of action to improve our education. Some think that the school year should be extended year-round with only short breaks between semesters. Others think it would not help. What do you think? Write an essay to persuade the reader of your opinion on the matter. Should the school year be lengthening?
46. Many people think that smoking is a dangerous habit that kills many from lung cancer. They think that cigarette smoking is not only dangerous for the people who smoke, but also for others around them. They think that the tobacco companies lure young people into smoking (convince young people to smoke) with their clever advertisements. Do you think that smoking should be made illegal? Do you think that no one should be allowed to smoke at all? Or, do you think the choice of smoking should be up to the individual person? What is your opinion? Take a stand. Should all smoking be banned and made illegal? Write an essay to convince the reader of your point of view.
47. In the 1920's it was illegal to sell or to drink alcohol. Today alcohol still causes many problems for the people who drink and for their families. There are also many deaths caused by people (teens) who



drink and drive. Should alcohol be made illegal again? Would making it illegal solve some problems, or would it impinge (limit) the rights of adults to do what they want to do? What do you think? Should the sale and drinking of alcohol again be made illegal? Write an essay to convince the reader of your point of view.

48. Many people are convinced that violence on TV influences children and teens to be violent in real life. Do you think that this is true? Do you think that the violence on TV is responsible for increased violence among today's youth? Take a stand on this issue and write an essay to convince your reader of your position on whether TV causes violence in real life.

49. Some schools in the United States are requiring that students volunteer for several hours each semester to help on a community problem. What do you think? Write an essay to persuade your reader of your point of view on whether students should be required to volunteer for several hours each semester to help on a community problem.

50. School dress codes often cause conflict among students and teachers. If you were on a committee of teachers and students to set the dress code at your school, what one item of your dress code would you argue to allow students to wear? How would you convince your fellow committee members to accept your idea to allow students to wear this item? Now, write an essay to convince your fellow dress-code committee members that the clothing item you chose be allowed at your school.

*Note: Conversely, (to be contrary) you could have a prompt to argue one item of clothing that should not be allowed at your school.*

51. Your local TV station is going to hire a student reporter for the evening news program, and you would like the job. Think about your local evening news program and why you should be chosen as the student reporter. Now write an essay to convince your local TV station to hire you as their student reporter.

52. The drama teacher is selecting students to act in a play about famous people. Think of yourself and some of your friends. Think who would be best suited to act in such a play and why they would be good at it. Now write an essay to convince the drama teacher to use that person in a play.
53. A national organization is honoring a teacher. Who should that teacher be? Think of some of the excellent teachers you have had in the past or have this year. Pick one whom you think should be honored by this award. Think of some reasons why you picked this teacher. Now write an essay to convince the national organization to honor the teacher you picked.
54. The School Advisory Council has money to spend in one of the following ways: improving the cafeteria, buying computers, getting interesting speakers for assemblies, or taking field trips. Pick one of these choices and think why you chose it over the others. Now write an essay to convince the School Advisory Council why they should spend their money on the choice you suggest.
55. The City Council wants a teen as a member to represent your age group. Think of yourself and the teens you know. Who would make an excellent representative on the City Council? Think of some reasons why you chose this person. Now write an essay to convince the City Council to select your choice.
56. Imagine that your school does not have a school newspaper. Your principal wants to begin one. Is a school newspaper a good idea? What do you think? Write an essay to convince your principal of your point of view.
57. A good friend of yours is thinking of moving to your town. Think of some attributes of your town that would appeal to your friend. Now write an essay to convince your friend to move to your town.
58. Imagine that you had a friend who ate only junk food, and you know that this is not good for him or her. Think of some reasons why eating junk food is not good for people. Now write an essay to convince your

friend that eating healthy foods is a good idea.

59. A movie director is looking for teens to act in a movie that will be set in your town. Think of yourself and all the teens you know. Who would you choose to act in this movie? Think why you would choose this person. Write an essay to convince the movie director of your choice.
60. If your school is going to grant your grade level one privilege that other grades in your school will not have, what should that privilege be? Think of one privilege that you would like to have that you do not have now. Think why your class should be granted this privilege. Write an essay to convince the administrators of your school to grant this privilege to your class for the rest of the year.



**Web Sites**

## Websites for Tutors

### Reading Comprehension

<http://wilearns.state.wi.us/apps/default.asp?cid=19#>

Wisconsin Literacy and Reading Network Source

### Leveled Books Database

<http://registration.beavton.k12.or.us/lbdb/>

This interactive database allows you to search for books that have been leveled using either the Reading Recovery or Guided Reading methodologies.

### Free On Line Books

<http://onlinebooks.library.upenn.edu/>

### Using News to Increase Vocabulary and Other Ways of Using U.S. News

<http://www.usnewsclassroom.com/waystouse/buildvoc.html>

### National Institute for Literacy

<http://www.nifl.gov/nifl/partnershipforreading/explore/vocabulary.html>

### Dolch Phrases

<http://www.createdbyteachers.com/dolchphrases.html>

### Fry's Instant Words

[http://connwww.iu5.org/cvelem/RR/Fry\\_Words.html](http://connwww.iu5.org/cvelem/RR/Fry_Words.html)

### Inferences

<http://www.springfield.k12.il.us/resources/languagearts/readingwriting/readinfer.html>

### Merriam-Webster Dictionary on Line

<http://www.m-w.com/>

### Web Resources for Reading

<http://www.dpi.state.wi.us/dpi/dlsis/cal/caltrer.html>

### Six Effective Comprehension Strategies

<http://wilearns.state.wi.us/apps/default.asp?cid=24>

### Instructional Strategies

<http://enrollmentoptions.sandi.net/readingstrategies.html>

### Adult Education Literacy

<http://www.literacy.uconn.edu/adlthome.htm>

### Literacy Links

<http://www-tcall.tamu.edu/newsletr/dec96.htm>

### Good Practice Strategies

A Review of Effective Practices in Adult Education and Literacy Classrooms

<http://www-tcall.tamu.edu/newsletr/dec96.htm#free>

It is usually harder to read words on lists than in stories. Word identification should **never** be used as the only estimate of reading level.

### Assessing Comprehension

<http://wilearns.state.wi.us/apps/default.asp?cid=95>

### Adult Learners with Learning Disabilities

<http://wilearns.state.wi.us/apps/default.asp?cid=663>

### List of Teaching Learning Activities

<http://wilearns.state.wi.us/apps/default.asp?cid=18>

### Visual Literacy

<http://wilearns.state.wi.us/apps/default.asp?cid=131>

### Compound Words

<http://www.janbrett.com/piggybacks/compound.htm>



## **More Literacy Websites**

### **Rhyming Dictionary**

Over 15, 000 words.

<http://shop.scholastic.com/webapp/wcs/stores/servlet/SIGCatalogSearch>

### **Mavis Beacon Typing**

<http://www.broderbund.com/SubCategory.asp?CID=249>

### **Keyboarding: Rules and Tools**

<http://www.crews.org/curriculum/ex/compsci/keyboarding/questions.htm>

### **Wisconsin Literacy Education and Reading Network Source**

There are various word lists at this site: Most Useful Family Word Patterns

<http://www.wilearns.com/apps/default.asp?ap=2&Mode=OneWordList&Word=6>

Most Useful Word Family Words

<http://www.wilearns.com/apps/Default.asp?cid=522>

### **English**

<http://www.paulnoll.com/China/Teach/English-teaching-materials.html>

### **Contractions**

<http://www.mcwn.org/contract/contract.html>

On line Quiz

### **Synonyms**

<http://www.manatee.k12.fl.us/sites/elementary/palmasola/syn6.htm>

On line practice

### **Basic Computer Terms**

<http://www.heightslibrary.org/basic.php>

### **Lists\*Vocabulary**

<http://iteslj.org/links/ESL/Vocabulary/Lists/>

### **Handy Word Lists**

<http://dictionary-thesaurus.com/Wordlists.html>

### **Fry Frequently Used Word List**

<http://www.solonschools.com/ART/Archive1999/FryWordList/fry.html>

# High Frequency Words



## High-Frequency Words and Vocabulary

### High-Frequency Words

High-frequency words are the words that appear most often in printed materials. According to Robert Hillerich, "Just three words *I, and, the* account for ten percent of all words in printed English."

"High-frequency words are hard for my students to remember because they tend to be abstract," says first grade teacher Kathy Chen. They can't use a picture clue to figure out the word *with*. And phonics clues don't always work either."

Learning to recognize high-frequency words by sight is critical to developing fluency in reading. Kathy explains, "Recognizing these words gives students a basic context for figuring out other words. Once they recognize *the*, they can predict with amazing accuracy what the next word will be."

### Teacher Tip

Word Walls, lists of words that follow a particular pattern, are an effective tool for teaching high-frequency words and vocabulary. Here are some ideas:

- With your students, choose words that have similar beginning sounds, vowel sounds, endings, or words on a particular subject.
- When students find an appropriate word, have them add it to the list.
- Encourage students to use these words in their writing and as a reference.

### Ideas for Teaching High-Frequency Words

- Have students create rebus sentences, using high-frequency words such as *the, is, and in*.
- Write high-frequency words on cards. Have students form sentences using a pocket chart.
- Have students keep lists of words they can read and write. When they have trouble with a word, they can refer to their notebooks.

- Point out similarities between new words and those students can already decode.

## Teaching Vocabulary

Julia Carriosa asks her fourth grade students to reread the following passage:

*When ocean particles contain bits of soil, especially clay, the particles of earth stick to oil droplets. The more sediments that are mixed in the water, the more oil is eventually deposited on the ocean bottom.*

"Now, let's suppose you don't know what *sediments* means," says Julia.

"What do you do?"

Lisa raises her hand. "Look it up in the dictionary?"

"Yes. But suppose you don't have a dictionary handy. What else could you do?"

Julia then helps her students see that the passage contains enough context clues to give them an adequate understanding of the word *sediments*.

## Choosing Vocabulary Words to Aid Comprehension

These steps can help you identify words that will improve students' comprehension when taught directly.

1. Identify a selection's theme or key concepts.
2. Cluster words from the selection that relate to the theme or key concepts.
3. Eliminate words students know or can figure out from context clues or structural analysis.
4. Eliminate words whose meaning is not needed to understand something important.

## Ideas for Teaching Vocabulary

- While reading aloud to the class, pause to discuss interesting or amusing words.
- Have students list in their journals words that interest or confuse them.
- Don't have students copy definitions, but do teach them how to use a dictionary.
- Use graphic devices to help students explore individual words or relationships between words.

### Teacher Tip: Effective Instruction

- Teach words in a meaningful context, using authentic literature.
- Teach only a few words per reading selection.
- Relate each word to students' prior knowledge.
- Group each word with other related words.
- Have students use the word to express their own ideas and experiences.
- Expose students to the word in a variety of contexts.

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## *175 Most Common Syllables in the 5,000 Most Frequent English Words*

|         |           |          |          |            |           |           |
|---------|-----------|----------|----------|------------|-----------|-----------|
| 1. ing  | 26. ti    | 51. po   | 76. tle  | 101. fac   | 126. li   | 151. ern  |
| 2. er   | 27. ri    | 52. sion | 77. day  | 102. fer   | 127. lo   | 152. eve  |
| 3. a    | 28. be    | 53. vi   | 78. ny   | 103. gen   | 128. men  | 153. hap  |
| 4. ly   | 29. per   | 54. el   | 79. pen  | 104. ic    | 129. min  | 154. ies  |
| 5. ed   | 30. to    | 55. est  | 80. pre  | 105. land  | 130. mon  | 155. ket  |
| 6. i    | 31. pro   | 56. la   | 81. tive | 106. light | 131. op   | 156. lec  |
| 7. es   | 32. ac    | 57. lar  | 82. car  | 107. ob    | 132. out  | 157. main |
| 8. re   | 33. ad    | 58. pa   | 83. ci   | 108. of    | 133. rec  | 158. mar  |
| 9. tion | 34. ar    | 59. ture | 84. mo   | 109. pos   | 134. ro   | 159. mis  |
| 10. in  | 35. ers   | 60. for  | 85. an   | 110. tain  | 135. sen  | 160. my   |
| 11. e   | 36. ment  | 61. is   | 86. aus  | 111. den   | 136. side | 161. nal  |
| 12. con | 37. or    | 62. mer  | 87. pi   | 112. ings  | 137. tal  | 162. ness |
| 13. y   | 38. tions | 63. pe   | 88. se   | 113. mag   | 138. tic  | 163. ning |
| 14. ter | 39. ble   | 64. ra   | 89. ten  | 114. ments | 139. ties | 164. nt   |
| 15. ex  | 40. der   | 65. so   | 90. tor  | 115. set   | 140. ward | 165. nu   |
| 16. al  | 41. ma    | 66. ta   | 91. ver  | 116. some  | 141. age  | 166. oc   |
| 17. de  | 42. na    | 67. as   | 92. ber  | 117. sub   | 142. ba   | 167. pres |
| 18. com | 43. si    | 68. col  | 93. can  | 118. sur   | 143. but  | 168. sup  |
| 19. o   | 44. un    | 69. fi   | 94. dy   | 119. ters  | 144. cit  | 169. te   |
| 20. di  | 45. at    | 70. ful  | 95. et   | 120. tu    | 145. cle  | 170. ted  |
| 21. en  | 46. dis   | 71. get  | 96. it   | 121. af    | 146. co   | 171. tem  |
| 22. an  | 47. ca    | 72. low  | 97. mu   | 122. au    | 147. cov  | 172. tin  |
| 23. ty  | 48. cal   | 73. ni   | 98. no   | 123. cy    | 148. da   | 173. tri  |
| 24. ry  | 49. man   | 74. par  | 99. ple  | 124. fa    | 149. dif  | 174. tro  |
| 25. u   | 50. ap    | 75. son  | 100. cu  | 125. im    | 150. ence | 175. up   |

Source: For a longer list of common syllables, see Blevins, W. (2001). *Teaching Phonics and Word Study in the Intermediate Grades*. New York: Scholastic, p. 196.

Suffixes

Root

Root

Prefixes

Root

Suffixes

Prefixes



## Prefixes

|       |   |
|-------|---|
| un    | not, the opposite of  |
| in    | not, the opposite of, the absence of, in within, on, into, upon, toward |
| dis   | opposite of, lack of , not  |
| mis   | bad, badly, wrong, wrongly  |
| im    | not, the opposite of, the absence of                                    |
| re    | again, anew, once more  |
| pre   | before, beforehand  |
| co    | with, together, joint, equally  |
| de    | do the opposite of, down, lower, take away, remove                      |
| en    | in, into, within  |
| ir    | not, the opposite of, the absence of                                    |
| inter | one with another, together, between                                     |
| anti  | against, opposed to, preventing, counteracting                          |
| semi  | half, partly, incompletely  |
| super | over, above, besides, further, exceedingly, surpassing                  |
| bi    | two, twice  |



## Understanding Prefixes and Suffixes from *Teaching and Assessing Phonics*

Students should be made aware that word parts called *prefixes* and *suffixes* can be added to words they already know. If students know the meanings of the *prefixes* and *suffixes*, they will be able to read and understand, and also write, many additional words.

Print these sentences on the board:

Did you tie that package?

Yes, but it came untied on the bus.

We better retie it before its contents fall out.

Read the sentences aloud with students and ask if anyone can figure out what *un* means in *untied*. Confirm that it means "not" or "the opposite of" *tied*. Ask for the meaning of *re* in *retie*. Confirm that it means "to do something again."

Explain that *re* and *un* are prefixes. When they are added to base words, we get a new word with a different meaning—*rename* means "to name again," *unclean* means "not clean," etc.

Print a sentence on the board, leaving a space to the left of a base word where a student is to fill in the prefix *un* or *re* to fit the definition you give. For example, write *They \_\_\_loaded the truck*, and ask for the word that means the truck was not loaded (*unloaded*). Or ask for the word that means they had to load the truck again (*reloaded*). Another example: Write *The cat was \_\_\_wise to chase that chipmunk up the tree*. Ask for the word that means the cat was not wise (*unwise*).

Similar activities should be undertaken for suffixes. For example, print base words on the chalkboard and have the students read them aloud: *rest*, *quick*, *thank*, *forget*. Then print the suffixes *less*, *ly*, *ful*, and *ness* on the board. Point to the base word *rest* and ask students to add a suffix to it to make a word that means "full of rest." Students should then print the suffixed word on their papers (*restful*). Do the same with the remaining base

words using appropriate definitions to include all the suffixes.

After students are comfortable with several prefixes and suffixes, present further activities that include both prefixes and suffixes.

Ask students to assemble word parts that fit sentences you read. Print *help*, *pain*, *harm*, *less*, and *ful* on five large word cards. Give the cards to five children, who should stand in front of the group in random order. Read aloud a sentence with a missing word (for examples, see below) and ask a volunteer to give a word that makes sense made from any two of the five word parts in the sentence. Then the two students with the words parts stand together, and the group decides if the correct word has been formed. The two then stand back and you read the next sentence. There are many sentence possibilities, which might include the following:

My brother can't swim. He is \_\_\_\_\_ in the water.

A broken arm can be very \_\_\_\_\_.

Jeanne S. Chall and Helen M. Popp, *Teaching and Assessing Phonics: A Guide for Teachers*, available from Educators Publishing Service.



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## Prefix and Suffix Word List Reference

*from Teaching and Assessing Phonics*

### Words with Prefixes

| dis        | im         | in         | mis          | pre        |
|------------|------------|------------|--------------|------------|
| disagree   | impatient  | inactive   | misbehave    | prearrange |
| disappear  | imperfect  | incomplete | mislay       | precook    |
| disarm     | impolite   | incorrect  | mislead      | prepaid    |
| disconnect | impossible | indefinite | misplace     | preschool  |
| dishonest  | impure     |            | mispronounce | pretest    |
| dislike    |            |            | misread      | preview    |
| disloyal   |            |            | misspell     |            |
| dismount   |            |            | mistreat     |            |
| disobey    |            |            | misuse       |            |
| disorder   |            |            |              |            |
| disown     |            |            |              |            |
| distrust   |            |            |              |            |

| re        |          | un         |           |
|-----------|----------|------------|-----------|
| reappear  | remove   | unable     | unheated  |
| rearm     | rename   | unafraid   | unkind    |
| rearrange | renumber | unbroken   | unknown   |
| recount   | repack   | uncertain  | unlike    |
| redo      | repaint  | uncommon   | unlock    |
| reenter   | repay    | uncooked   | unlucky   |
| refill    | replace  | uncover    | unpainted |
| refresh   | replay   | undecided  | unreal    |
| refried   | reread   | undress    | unselfish |
| regrew    | rerun    | unequal    | untangle  |
| regroup   | resale   | uneven     | untied    |
| reheat    | reshape  | unexpected | unusual   |
| rehire    | retell   | unfair     | unwrapped |
| reload    | rethink  | unfamiliar |           |
| remade    | retrace  | unfasten   |           |
| remake    | reword   | unhappy    |           |
| remarry   | rewrite  | unhealthy  |           |

## Words with Suffixes

| able           | en         | er        | ful         |
|----------------|------------|-----------|-------------|
| admirable      | blacken    | bomber    | armful      |
| agreeable      | brighten   | catcher   | careful     |
| approachable   | cheapen    | commander | cheerful    |
| avoidable      | dampen     | dancer    | colorful    |
| believable     | darken     | defender  | delightful  |
| breakable      | fatten     | designer  | fearful     |
| comfortable    | flatten    | dodger    | forgetful   |
| curable        | freshen    | driver    | helpful     |
| desirable      | gladden    | dryer     | hopeful     |
| enjoyable      | golden     | explorer  | joyful      |
| excitable      | harden     | follower  | painful     |
| excusable      | lengthen   | gambler   | peaceful    |
| exchangeable   | lighten    | golfer    | playful     |
| imaginable     | loosen     | invader   | respectful  |
| laughable      | moisten    | juggler   | restful     |
| likable        | quicken    | leader    | successful  |
| manageable     | ripen      | manager   | thankful    |
| moveable       | sadden     | painter   | useful      |
| noticeable     | sharpen    | performer | wasteful    |
| observable     | shorten    | pitcher   | wonderful   |
| pleasurable    | strengthen | pointer   | youthful    |
| readable       | sweeten    | rancher   |             |
| respectable    | thicken    | robber    | ible        |
| salable        | toughen    | ruler     | collapsible |
| teachable      | whiten     | scraper   | collectible |
| trainable      | widen      | settler   | convertible |
| understandable | wooden     | sharpener | defensible  |
| usable         |            | shopper   | digestible  |
| washable       |            | speaker   | expressible |
| wearable       |            | stinger   | forcible    |
| workable       |            | teacher   | reversible  |
|                |            | trapper   |             |
|                |            | washer    |             |

## Words with Suffixes continued

| ion           | less       | ly        | ness        |
|---------------|------------|-----------|-------------|
| action        | ageless    | badly     | cleverness  |
| attraction    | beardless  | bravely   | darkness    |
| celebration   | blameless  | brightly  | fairness    |
| collection    | breathless | cleverly  | foolishness |
| collision     | careless   | fairly    | goodness    |
| communication | childless  | foolishly | greatness   |
| confusion     | cloudless  | freely    | kindness    |
| construction  | fearless   | gladly    | likeness    |
| correction    | harmless   | greatly   | loudness    |
| decision      | helpless   | happily   | meanness    |
| decoration    | homeless   | honestly  | nervousness |
| demonstration | hopeless   | kindly    | politeness  |
| destruction   | jobless    | lonely    | sadness     |
| digestion     | painless   | loudly    | sickness    |
| direction     | restless   | nearly    | smoothness  |
| division      | sleepless  | neatly    | softness    |
| election      | useless    | nervously | sweetness   |
| erosion       | worthless  | politely  | swiftness   |
| explosion     |            | proudly   | thickness   |
| graduation    |            | quietly   |             |
| hibernation   |            | rudely    |             |
| infection     |            | safely    |             |
| injection     |            | sickly    |             |
| inspection    |            | smoothly  |             |
| invention     |            | softly    |             |
| location      |            | sweetly   |             |
| migration     |            | swiftly   |             |
| objection     |            | wisely    |             |
| operation     |            |           |             |
| pollution     |            |           |             |
| protection    |            |           |             |
| rotation      |            |           |             |
| selection     |            |           |             |
| suggestion    |            |           |             |
| vacation      |            |           |             |

Jeanne S. Chall and Helen M. Popp, *Teaching and Assessing Phonics: A Guide for Teachers*, available from Educators Publishing Service.

## Prefixes, Suffixes, Roots

| Root, Prefix or Suffix                | Meaning                                 | Examples   |
|---------------------------------------|---|--|
| a, ac, ad, af, ag, al, an, ap, as, at | to, toward, near, in addition to, by    | aside, accompany, adjust, aggression, allocate, annihilate, affix, associate, attend, adverb |
| a, an                                 | not, without                            | apolitical, atheist, anarchy, anonymous, apathy, aphasia, anemia                             |
| ab, abs                               | away from, off                          | absolve, abrupt, absent  |
| act, ag:                              | do, act, drive                          | active, react, agent, active, agitate  |
| am, ami                               | love, like                              | amorous, amiable, amicable   |
| ambul                                 | to walk                                 | ambulatory, amble, ambulance, somnambulist   |
| anim                                  | mind, life, spirit, anger               | animal, animate, animosity   |
| ann, annu, enni                       | yearly                                  | annual, annuity, anniversary, perennial  |
| ante                                  | before                                  | anterior, anteroom, antebellum, antedate, antecedent antediluvian                            |
| anti, ant                             | against, opposite                       | antisocial, antiseptic, antithesis, antibody, antichrist, antinomies, antifreeze, antipathy  |
| auc, aug, aut                         | to originate, to increase               | augment, author, augment, auction  |
| aud, audi, aur                        | to hear                                 | audience, auditory, audible, auditorium, audiovisual, audition, auricular                    |
| auto                                  | self                                    | automobile, automatic, automotive, autograph, autonomous, autoimmune                         |
| -acy, -cy                             | Noun: state or quality                  | privacy, nfancy, adequacy, intimacy, supremacy   |
| -age                                  | Noun: activity, or result of action     | courage, suffrage, shrinkage, tonnage  |
| -al                                   | Noun: action, result of action          | referral, disavowal, disposal, festival  |
| -an                                   | Noun: person                            | artisan, guardian, historian, magician   |
| -ance, -ence                          | Noun: action, state, quality or process | resistance, independence, extravagance, fraudulence  |

|   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
|   | quality or capacity                                |   |
| -ant, -ent                                | Noun: an agent, something that performs the action | disinfectant, dependent, fragrant   |
| -ate                                      | Noun: state, office, function                      | candidate, electorate, delegate   |
| -ation                                    | Noun: action, resulting state                      | specialization, aggravation, alternation  |
| -ate                                      | Verb: cause to be                                  | graduate, ameliorate, amputate, colligate   |
| -able, -ible                              | Adjective: worth, ability                          | solvable, incredible  |
| -al, -ial, -ical                          | Adjective: quality, relation                       | structural, territorial, categorical  |
| -ant, -ent, -ient                         | Adjective: kind of agent, indication               | important, dependent, convenient  |
| -ar, -ary                                 | Adjective: resembling, related to                  | spectacular, unitary  |
| -ate                                      | Adjective: kind of state                           | involute  |
| bene                                      | good, well, gentle                                 | benefactor, beneficial, benevolent, benediction, beneficiary, benefit               |
| bi, bine                                  | two  | biped, bifurcate, biweekly, bivalve, biannual                                       |
| bio, bi                                   | life   | biography, biology  |
| bibli, biblio                             | book   | bibliophile, bibliography   |
| brev                                      | short  | abbreviate, brevity, brief  |
| cad, cap, cas, ceiv, cept, capt, cid, cip | to take, to seize, to hold                         | receive, deceive, capable, capacious, captive, accident, capture, occasion, concept |
| cat, cata, cath                           | down, with   | catalogue, category, catheter   |
| ceas, cede, ceed, cess                    | to go, to yield                                    | succeed, proceed, precede, recede, secession, exceed, succession                    |
| cent                                      | hundred  | centennial, century, centipede  |
| centr                                     | center   | eccentricity, centrifugal, concentric   |
| chron                                     | time   | chronology, chronic, chronicle chronometer, anachronism                             |
| cide, cis                                 | to kill, to cut                                    | fratricide, suicide, incision, excision, circumcision                               |

|                             |   |  |
|-----------------------------|---|--|
| circum                      | around  | circumnavigate, circumflex, circumstance, circumcision, circumference, circumorbital, circumlocution, circumvent, circumscribe, circulatory                        |
| clam, claim                 | shout   | acclaim, clamor, proclaim, exclaim   |
| clin                        | lean, bend                                    | decline, aclinic, inclination  |
| clud, clus claus            | to close, shut                                | include, exclude, clause, claustrophobia, enclose, exclusive, reclusive, conclude  |
| co, cog, col, con, com, cor | with, together                                | cohesiveness, cognate, collaborate, convene, commitment, compress, contemporary, converge, compact, confluence, convenient, concatenate, conjoin, combine, correct |
| com, con                    | fully   | complete, compel, conscious, condense, confess, confirm  |
| cogn, gnos                  | know to know                                  | recognize cognizant diagnose agnostic  |
| contra, counter             | against, opposite                             | contradict, counteract, contravene, contrary, counterspy, contrapuntal   |
| corp                        | body  | corporate, corpse, corpulent, incorporate  |
| cour, cur, curr, curs       | run, course                                   | occur, excursion, discourse, courier, course   |
| cort                        | correct                                       | escort, cortage  |
| cre, cresc, cret, crease    | grow  | create, crescent, accretion, increase  |
| cred                        | to believe                                    | credo, credible, credence, credit, credential, incredible, credulity, incredulous  |
| cycl                        | circle, wheel                                 | bicycle, cyclical, cycle, encyclical   |
| de                          | from, down, away, to do the opposite, against | detach, deploy, derange, decrease, deodorize, devoid, deflate, degenerate, deice   |
| dec                         | ten   | decimal, decade, decalogue, decimate   |
| dec, dign                   | suitable                                      | decent decorate dignity  |
| dei, div                    | God   | divinity, divine, deity, divination, deify   |
| demo                        | people  | democracy, demagogue, epidemic   |
| di                          | two   | divide, diverge, diglycerides  |
| dia                         | through, across, between                      | diameter, diagonal, dialogue dialect, dialectic, diagnosis, diachronic   |
| dic, dict, dit              | say, speak                                    | predict, verdict, malediction, dictionary, dictate, dictum, diction, indict  |



|                   |  |  |
|-------------------|--|--|
| dit               | give   |  |
| dis, dys, dif     | away, not,<br>negative, opposite<br>of, separate | dismiss, differ, disallow, disperse, dissuade, divide,<br>disconnect, dysfunction, disproportion, disrespect,<br>distemper, distrust, distaste, disarray, dyslexia |
| doc, doct         | teach, prove                                     | docile, doctor, doctrine, document   |
| dog, dox          | thought, idea                                    | dogma, orthodox, paradox   |
| duc, duct         | to lead, pull                                    | produce, abduct, product, transducer, viaduct,<br>aqueduct, induct, deduct, reduce, induce   |
| -dom              | Noun: place, state<br>of being                   | wisdom   |
| ecto              | outside, external                                | ectomorph, ectoderm, ectoplasm   |
| endo              | inside, within                                   | endotoxin, endoscope, endogenous   |
| equi              | equal  | equidistant, equilateral, equilibrium, equinox,<br>equitable, equation, equator  |
| e, ex, ef, es, ec | out, away, from,<br>fully                        | emit, expulsion, exhale, exit, express, exclusive,<br>enervate, expel, exceed, explosion   |
| en, em            | put into, make                                   | enamor, empower  |
| epi               | upon, beside, over                               | epilogue   |
| ev, et            | time, age  | medieval, eternal  |
| exter, extra      | outside of, beyond                               | external, extrinsic, exterior extraordinary,<br>extrabiblical extracurricular, extrapolate,<br>extraneous  |
| -er, -or          | Noun: person or<br>thing that does<br>something  | porter, collector  |
| -ed               | Verb: past tense                                 | attained   |
| -en               | Verb: to cause to<br>become                      | moisten  |
| -er, -or          | Verb: action                                     | ponder, clamor   |
| -ed               | Adjective: having<br>the quality of              | terraced   |
| -en               | Adjective:<br>material                           | silken   |
| -er               | Adjective:<br>comparative                        | brighter   |
| -est              | Adjective:<br>superlative                        | strongest  |

|                                  |  |  |
|----------------------------------|--|--|
| fa, fess                         | speak  | fable, fabulous, fame, famous, confess, profess  |
| fac, fact, fec,<br>fic, fas, fea | make do, do                                  | difficult, fashion, feasible, feature, factory, fact,<br>effect                                      |
| femto                            | quadrillionth                                | femtosecond  |
| fer                              | bear, carry                                  | fertile, infer, refer  |
| fic, feign, fain,<br>fit, feat   | shape, make,<br>fashion                      | fiction, faint, feign  |
| fid                              | belief, faith                                | confide, diffident, fidelity   |
| fig                              | shape, form                                  | figurem, effigy, figure, figment   |
| flect, flex                      | to bend                                      | flexible, reflection, deflect, circumflex  |
| flict                            | strike                                       | affliction, conflict, inflict  |
| flu, fluct, flux                 | flow   | effluence, influence, effluvium, fluctuate,<br>confluence, reflux, influx, fluid                     |
| for, fore                        | before                                       | forecast, fortune, foresee   |
| form                             | shape  | format, formulate  |
| fort                             | strength                                     | effort, forte, fortifiable   |
| fract, frag, frai                | break  | frail, fracture, fragment  |
| fuge                             | flee   | subterfuge, refuge, centrifuge   |
| fuse                             | pour   |  |
| -ful                             | Noun: an amount<br>or quantity that<br>fills | mouthful   |
| -ful                             | Adjective: having,<br>giving, marked by      | fanciful   |
| -fold                            | Adverb: in a<br>manner of, marked<br>by      | fourfold   |
| -fy                              | make   |  |
| gen, gin                         | to give birth, kind                          | generate, generally, gingerly, indigenous  |
| geo                              | earth  | geography  |
| giga                             | billion                                      | gigabyte, gigaflop   |
| gor                              | to gather, to bring<br>together              | category, categorize   |
| grad, gress, gree                | to gather, to bring<br>together              | grade, degree, progress  |
| graph, gram, graf                | to write, draw                               | polygraph, grammar, biography, graphite, telegram,<br>autograph, lithograph, historiography, graphic |

|                |  |   |
|----------------|--|---|
| hale           | brathe   |   |
| her, hes       | to stick   | adhere, hesitate  |
| hetero         | other  | heterodox, heterogeneous, heterosexual, heterodyne  |
| hex, ses, sex  | six  | hexagon, hexameter, sestet, sextuplets  |
| homo           | same   | homogenized, homosexual, homonym, homophone   |
| hyper          | over, above  | hyperactive, hypertensive, hyperbolic, hypersensitive, hyperventilate, hyperkinetic                             |
| in, im, il, ir | not  | illegible, irresolute, inaction, inviolate, innocuous, intractable, innocent, impregnable, impossible, imposter |
| in, im, (il)   | in, into, on, near, toward                               | instead, import   |
| infra          | beneath  | infrared, infrastructure  |
| inter          | between, among   | international, intercept, interject, intermission, internal, intermittent,                                      |
| intro          | into, within   | interoffice, introvert, introspection, introduce  |
| it             | go   |   |
| -ian, an       | Noun: related to, one that is                            | pedestrian, human   |
| -ia            | Noun: names, diseases                                    | phobia  |
| -iatry         | Noun: art of healing                                     | psychiatry  |
| -ic, ics       | Noun: related to the arts and sciences                   | arithmetic, economics   |
| -ice           | Noun: act  | malice  |
| -ing           | Noun: material made for, activity, result of an activity | flooring, swimming, building  |
| -ion           | Noun: condition or action                                | abduction   |
| -ism           | Noun: doctrine, belief, action or conduct                | formalism   |
| -ist           | Noun: person or member                                   | podiatrist  |

|                      |                                    |  |
|----------------------|------------------------------------|--|
| -ite                 | Noun: state or quality             | graphite   |
| -ity, ty             | Noun: state or quality             | lucidity, novelty  |
| -ive                 | Noun: condition                    | native   |
| -ify                 | Verb: cause                        | specify  |
| -ing                 | Verb: present participle           | depicting  |
| -ize                 | Verb: cause                        | fantasize  |
| -ic                  | Adjective: quality, relation       | generic  |
| -ile                 | Adjective: having the qualities of | projectile   |
| -ing                 | Adjective: activity                | cohering   |
| -ish                 | Adjective: having the character of | newish   |
| -ive, -ative, -itive | Adjective: having the quality of   | festive, cooperative, sensitive  |
| jac, ject            | to throw                           | reject, eject, project, trajectory, interject, dejected, inject, ejaculate |
| judice               | judge                              |  |
| jug, junct, just     | to join                            | junction, adjust, conjugal   |
| labor                | work                               |  |
| lex, leag, leg       | law                                | legal, college, league   |
| lect, leg, lig       | choose, gather, select, read       | collect, legible, eligible   |
| lide                 | strike                             |  |
| loc                  | place, area                        | location, locally  |
| log                  | say, speech, word, reason, study   | logic  |
| luc, lum, lust:      | light                              | translucent, illuminate, illustrate  |
| lude                 | play                               |  |
| -less                | Adjective: without, missing        | motiveless   |
| -ly                  | Adverb: in the manner of           | fluently   |
| mal                  | bad, badly                         | malformation, maladjusted, dismal, malady,                                 |

|                       |                                 |  |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------|--|
|                       |                                 | malcontent, malfunction, malfeasance, maleficent                                 |
| man, manu             | hand, make, do                  | manage, management   |
| main                  | bide                            |  |
| metr                  | admeasure                       |  |
| mega                  | great, million                  | megaphone, megaton, megaflop, megalomaniac, megabyte, megalopolis                |
| mem                   | recall, remember                | memory, commemorate  |
| ment                  | mind                            | mental, mention  |
| min                   | little, small                   | minute, minor, minuscule   |
| meso                  | middle                          | mesomorph, mesoamerica, mesosphere   |
| meta                  | beyond, change                  | metaphor, metamorphosis, metabolism, metahistorical, metainformation             |
| micro                 | millionth                       | microgram, microvolt   |
| mill, kilo            | thousand                        | millennium, kilobyte, kiloton  |
| milli                 | thousandth                      | millisecond, milligram, millivolt  |
| mis                   | wrong, bad, badly               | misconduct, misinform, misinterpret, mispronounce, misnomer, mistake, misogynist |
| mit, miss             | to send                         | transmit, permit, missile, missionary, remit, admit, missive, mission            |
| mob, mov, mot         | move                            | motion, remove, mobile   |
| mono                  | one                             | monopoly, monotype, monologue, mononucleosis, monorail, monotheist,              |
| morph                 | shape                           | polymorphic, morpheme, amorphous   |
| multi                 | many                            | multitude, multipartite, multiply, multipurpose                                  |
| -ment                 | Noun: condition or result       | document   |
| nano                  | billionth                       | nanosecond, nanobucks  |
| nasc, nat, gnant, nai | to be born                      | nascent, native, pregnant, naive   |
| nom, nym              | name                            | nominate, synonym  |
| non                   | nine                            | nonagon  |
| non                   | not                             | nonferrous, nonsense, nonabrasive, nondescript                                   |
| nov                   | new                             | novice, novelty  |
| -ness                 | Noun: state, condition, quality | kindness   |
| oct                   | eight                           | octopus, octagon, octogenarian, octave   |
| ob, oc, of, op        | toward, against, in             | oppose, occur, offer, obtain   |

|                                    |   |  |
|------------------------------------|---|--|
|                                    | the way                                       |  |
| omni                               | all   | omnipotent, omnivorous, omniscient                               |
| oper                               | work  | operate, opus  |
| over                               | excessive, above                              | overwork, overall, overwork                                      |
| -or                                | Noun: condition or activity                   | valor  |
| -ory                               | Noun: place for, serves for                   | territory  |
| -ous, -eous, -ose, -ious           | Adjective: having the quality of, relating to | adventurous, courageous, verbose, fractious                      |
| pair, pare                         | arrange                                       |  |
| pat, pass, path                    | feel, suffer                                  | patient, passion, sympathy, pathology                            |
| para                               | beside  | paradox, paraprofessional, paramedic, paraphrase, parachute      |
| ped, pod                           | foot  | impede, pedestal, podium, pedestrian                             |
| pel, puls                          | drive, push                                   | repel, pulse   |
| pend, pond, pens                   | to hang, weigh                                | suspend, append  |
| per                                | through, intensive                            | persecute, permit, perspire, perforate, persuade                 |
| peri                               | around  | periscope, perimeter, perigee, periodontal                       |
| phan, phas, phen, fan, phant, fant | show, make visible                            | phantom, fantasy   |
| phe                                | speak   |  |
| phil                               | love  | philosopher  |
| phon                               | sound   | telephone, phonics, phonograph, phonetic, homophone, microphone  |
| phot                               | light   | photograph, photosynthesis, photon                               |
| pico                               | trillionth                                    | picofarad, picocurie   |
| pict                               | paint, show, draw                             | picture, depict  |
| pli, ply                           | fold  | reply, implicate, ply  |
| plore                              | weep  |  |
| poly                               | many  | polytheist, polygon, polygamy, polymorphous                      |
| pon, pos                           | put, place                                    | postpone, position, posture                                      |
| port                               | to carry                                      | porter, portable, report, transportation, deport, import, export |
| post                               | after, behind                                 | postpone, postdate   |
| pre, pur                           | before  | precede  |

|                                 |                       |  |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------|--|
| prim, prin                      | first                 |  |
| pro                             | for, foward           | propel   |
| psych                           | mind                  | psychology   |
| pute                            | think                 |  |
| quat, quad                      | four                  | quadrangle, quadruplets  |
| quint, penta                    | five                  | quintet, quintuplets, pentagon, pentane, pentameter                        |
| quip                            | ship                  |  |
| quir, quis, quest, quer         | seek, ask             | query, inquire, exquisite, quest   |
| re                              | back, again           | report, realign, retract, revise, regain                                   |
| retro                           | backwards             | retrorocket, retrospect, retrogression, retroactive                        |
| rupt                            | break                 | rupture, corrupt, interrupt  |
| sanct                           | holy                  | sanctify, sanctuary, sanction, sanctimonious, sacrosanct                   |
| sci, scio                       | to know               | conscious, science   |
| scrib, script                   | to write              | inscription, prescribe, proscribe, manuscript, conscript, scribble, scribe |
| se                              | apart, move away from | secede   |
| sect, sec                       | cut                   | intersect, transect, dissect, secant, section                              |
| sent, sens                      | feel, think           | sentiment, sensation   |
| semi                            | half                  | semifinal, semiconscious, semiannual, semimonthly, semicircle              |
| sept                            | seven                 | septet, septennial   |
| serve                           | keep                  |  |
| sequ, secut, sue                | follow                | sequence, consecutive, ensue   |
| sist                            | to withstand, make up | insist   |
| soci                            | to join, companions   | sociable, society  |
| sol                             | alone                 | solitary, isolate  |
| solv, solu, solut               | loosen, explain       | solve, absolute, soluble   |
| spect, spec, spi, spic,         | to look, see          | inspect, spectator, circumspect, retrospect, prospect, spectacle           |
| sper                            | hope                  |  |
| spir                            | breath, soul          | respiration, inspire   |
| stand, stant, stab, stat, stan, | stand                 | stature, establish, stance   |

|                                  |  |  |
|----------------------------------|--|--|
| sti, sta, st, stead              |  |  |
| strain, strict,<br>string, stige | bind, pull                                     | constrict, restrain, stringent, prestige   |
| stru, struct,<br>stroy, stry     | build  | destroy, misconstrue, obstruct   |
| sub, suc, suf,<br>sup, sur, sus  | under, below,<br>from, secretly,<br>instead of | sustain, survive, support, suffice, succeed, submerge,<br>submarine, substandard, subnormal, subvert |
| super, supra                     | over, above                                    | superior, suprarenal, superscript, supernatural,<br>superimpose, supercede                           |
| syn, sym                         | together, at the<br>same time                  | sympathy, synthesis, synchronous, syndicate  |
| -ship                            | Noun: status,<br>condition                     | relationship   |
| -ster                            | person   |  |
| tact, tang, tig,<br>ting         | touch  | tactile, tactilely, tangible, contiguous, contingent   |
| tain, ten, tent,<br>tin          | hold, keep, have                               | retain, continue, content, tenacious   |
| tect, teg                        | cover  | detect, protect, tegular, tegument   |
| tele                             | distance, from<br>afar                         | television, telephone, telegraph, telemetry  |
| tend, tens, tend                 | stretch  | contend, extensive   |
| tera                             | trillion                                       | terabyte, teraflop   |
| term                             | end, boundary,<br>limit                        | exterminate, terminal  |
| terr                             | earth  | territory, terrain   |
| test                             | see, witness                                   | attest, testify  |
| tire                             | draw, pull                                     |  |
| theo, the                        | God  | theology, theist, polytheist   |
| therm                            | heat   | thermometer, thermal   |
| tor, tors, tort                  | twist  | torsion, torment, contort  |
| tract, trai, treat               | to drag, draw, pull                            | attract, tractor, traction, extract, retract,<br>protract, detract, subtract, contract, intractable  |
| trans                            | across, beyond,<br>change                      | transform, transoceanic, transmit, transport,<br>transducer  |
| tri                              | three  | tripod, triangle, trinity, trilateral  |



|                 |   |   |
|-----------------|---|---|
| tribute         | give  |   |
| un              | not, against, opposite                        | unceasing   |
| uni             | one   | uniform, unilateral, universal, unity, unanimousone, unite, unison                      |
| unti            | before  |   |
| -ure            | Noun: act, condition, process, function       | exposure, conjecture  |
| vac             | empty   | vacant, vacuum  |
| vade            | go  |   |
| veh, vect       | to carry                                      | vector, vehicle, convection, vehement   |
| ven, vent       | come  | convene, invent, prevent  |
| ver             | true  | verify  |
| verb, verv      | word  | verify, veracity, verbalize, verve  |
| vert, vers      | to turn, change                               | convert, revert, advertise; versatile, vertigo, invert, reversion, extravert, introvert |
| vi              | way   |   |
| vid, vie, vis   | see   | visible, video, review, indivisible   |
| vit, viv        | life  | vital, vitality, vitamins, revitalize, revive   |
| voc, voke       | call  | vocal, revoke   |
| volv, volt, vol | roll, turn                                    | revolve, revolt, evolution  |
| with            | against                                       |   |
| -ward           | Adverb: in a direction or manner              | homeward  |
| -wise           | Adverb: in the manner of, with regard to      | timewise  |
| -y              | Noun: state, condition, result of an activity | society, victory  |
| -y              | Adjective: marked by, having                  | hungry  |

|                 |   |  |
|-----------------|---|--|
| tribute         | give  |  |
| un              | not, against,<br>opposite                           | unceasing  |
| uni             | one   | uniform, unilateral, universal, unity, unanimousone,<br>unite, unison                      |
| unti            | before  |  |
| -ure            | Noun: act,<br>condition, process,<br>function       | exposure, conjecture   |
| vac             | empty   | vacant, vacuum   |
| vade            | go  |  |
| veh, vect       | to carry  | vector, vehicle, convection, vehement  |
| ven, vent       | come  | convene, invent, prevent   |
| ver             | true  | verify   |
| verb, verv      | word  | verify, veracity, verbalize, verve   |
| vert, vers      | to turn, change                                     | convert, revert, advertise, versatile, vertigo, invert,<br>reversion, extravert, introvert |
| vi              | way   |  |
| vid, vie, vis   | see   | visible, video, review, indivisible  |
| vit, viv        | life  | vital, vitality, vitamins, revitalize, revive  |
| voc, voke       | call  | vocal, revoke  |
| volv, volt, vol | roll, turn  | revolve, revolt, evolution   |
| with            | against   |  |
| -ward           | Adverb: in a<br>direction or<br>manner              | homeward   |
| -wise           | Adverb: in the<br>manner of, with<br>regard to      | timewise   |
| -y              | Noun: state,<br>condition, result<br>of an activity | society, victory   |
| -y              | Adjective: marked<br>by, having                     | hungry   |

<http://ueno.cool.ne.jp/let/prefix.html>

# Spelling

## Tips For Spelling

### TEACHING SPELLING

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#### TO SPELL YOU MUST:

1. Recognize letters and sounds.
2. Remember the correct sequence of letters and spell the word in your mind.
3. Recall the sequence.

#### MEMORY

1. We remember what we want to remember.
2. We tend to remember the most recently learned material.
3. Practice is essential for memory.
4. The easiest material to remember is that which we have discovered ourselves.

#### BUT HOW?

1. Make the spelling words relevant. Learn spelling within a context. (Write letters where spelling is important.)
2. Try to write a whole passage first, then edit. Don't struggle over each word as it comes up.
3. If the spelling of a word is asked for, give it, and circle it so that you can go back to it later in discussion. Don't interrupt the flow of meaning.
4. Don't ask your learner to copy words or passages unless you have explained the reason why. Do you know why? If they are rehearsing it as they copy it, it will make more sense.
5. Put a relevant spelling word on a card. Rehearse it. Turn the card over. Practice it.

5. Trace over a spelling word with your finger or pencil. This reinforces the visual memory task involved in spelling.
6. Break words into syllables. Long words tend to be threatening.
7. Mnemonics - a trick to remember a hard spelling word. (In February we say brrr.)
8. Fill in gaps and have the learner learn each letter in a word. (--bruary, ---ruary, ----uary, etc.)
9. Play crossword and Scrabble games.
10. Don't begin by talking about consonants and vowels. Slowly introduce these concepts if you feel it is necessary.
11. After writing a story, tick all the words the learner feels sure he has spelled correctly. See if you can get the learner to identify the parts of the words he is not sure of.
12. Pay attention to the kinds of mistakes the learner makes.

# SPELLING GRADE LEVEL PLACEMENT—FORM A

## Grade 2

1. car
2. game
3. house
4. from

I drove our **car** into the garage.  
What card **game** are you playing?  
Our **house** has just been painted white.  
Mother picked up the shoebox **from** the floor.

car  
game  
house  
from

## Grade 3

5. close
6. along
7. right
8. week

When you leave, please **close** the door.  
We walked **along** the river.  
Do you pitch with your **right** or your left hand?  
What day of the **week** is it?

close  
along  
right  
week

## Grade 4

9. driver
10. pound
11. January
12. broke

The bus **driver** drove us to school.  
Those apples cost 39 cents a **pound**.  
**January** is the first month of the year.  
The glass **broke** into many pieces.

driver  
pound  
January  
broke

## Grade 5

13. fifth
14. wrist
15. sentence
16. excuse

That boy sits in the **fifth** row.  
The bracelet around my **wrist** is tight.  
Will you write a **sentence** for me?  
What is your **excuse** for being late?

fifth  
wrist  
sentence  
excuse

## Grade 6

17. direction
18. activity
19. vegetable
20. gentle

In what **direction** is the car going?  
Did you sign up for an after-school **activity**?  
The only **vegetable** served at the dinner was peas.  
Did you notice that **gentle** dog?

direction  
activity  
vegetable  
gentle

## Grade 7

21. apply
22. legal
23. interfere
24. satisfy

I am now ready to **apply** for that job.  
Is that document **legal**?  
Please do not **interfere** with my work.  
Milk and cookies will **satisfy** my hunger.

apply  
legal  
interfere  
satisfy

## Grade 8

25. application
26. calculating
27. emphasize
28. temperament

I completed my job **application** form.  
The banker is **calculating** his expenses.  
I strongly **emphasize** my stand on the issue.  
He has an even **temperament**.

application  
calculating  
emphasize  
temperament

# SPELLING GRADE LEVEL PLACEMENT—FORM B

|         |                  |  |              |
|---------|------------------|--|--------------|
| Grade 2 | 1. work          | We have a lot of school <b>work</b> to do.                         | work         |
|         | 2. bed           | What time do you go to <b>bed</b> ?                                | bed          |
|         | 3. fire          | We lit a match to start a <b>fire</b> in the fireplace.            | fire         |
|         | 4. dry           | Please wash and <b>dry</b> the dishes.                             | dry          |
| Grade 3 | 5. clear         | It is easy to see through the <b>clear</b> glass.                  | clear        |
|         | 6. street        | The <b>street</b> was long and winding.                            | street       |
|         | 7. light         | Don't turn on the hall <b>light</b> .                              | light        |
|         | 8. walk          | We will <b>walk</b> to school this morning.                        | walk         |
| Grade 4 | 9. follow        | We were told to <b>follow</b> these directions.                    | follow       |
|         | 10. check        | Always <b>check</b> over your paper for mistakes.                  | check        |
|         | 11. February     | <b>February</b> is the second month of the year.                   | February     |
|         | 12. body         | He has a long, lean <b>body</b> .                                  | body         |
| Grade 5 | 13. perhaps      | <b>Perhaps</b> we will leave earlier for the train.                | perhaps      |
|         | 14. voices       | We heard strange <b>voices</b> down the hall.                      | voices       |
|         | 15. empty        | I will fill the <b>empty</b> bottle with water.                    | empty        |
|         | 16. general      | There is <b>general</b> interest in the school project.            | general      |
| Grade 6 | 17. necessary    | It will be <b>necessary</b> to charge a small fee.                 | necessary    |
|         | 18. accident     | We arrived at the scene of the car <b>accident</b> .               | accident     |
|         | 19. weight       | The <b>weight</b> of the snow caused the roof to collapse.         | weight       |
|         | 20. carefully    | You are to read this article <b>carefully</b> .                    | carefully    |
| Grade 7 | 21. mysterious   | There was a <b>mysterious</b> caller at the door.                  | mysterious   |
|         | 22. custom       | It is not my <b>custom</b> to rise late in the morning.            | custom       |
|         | 23. original     | That is not a copy but an <b>original</b> piece of art.            | original     |
|         | 24. courageous   | During his ordeal she remained <b>courageous</b> .                 | courageous   |
| Grade 8 | 25. communicate  | I will <b>communicate</b> my feelings to you in writing.           | communicate  |
|         | 26. significant  | We made <b>significant</b> changes in our plans to visit you.      | significant  |
|         | 27. unimaginable | If that indeed happened, it is <b>unimaginable</b> .               | unimaginable |
|         | 28. exceptional  | The runner is <b>exceptional</b> in his ability to win every race. | exceptional  |

# Spelling Grade Level Placement

## Form A

### Level 2

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

### Level 4

9. \_\_\_\_\_

10. \_\_\_\_\_

11. \_\_\_\_\_

12. \_\_\_\_\_

### Level 3

5. \_\_\_\_\_

6. \_\_\_\_\_

7. \_\_\_\_\_

8. \_\_\_\_\_

### Level 5

13. \_\_\_\_\_

14. \_\_\_\_\_

15. \_\_\_\_\_

16. \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_



**Form A**

**Level 6**

**17.** \_\_\_\_\_

**18.** \_\_\_\_\_

**19.** \_\_\_\_\_

**20.** \_\_\_\_\_

**Level 8**

**25.** \_\_\_\_\_

**26.** \_\_\_\_\_

**27.** \_\_\_\_\_

**28.** \_\_\_\_\_

**Level 7**

**21.** \_\_\_\_\_

**22.** \_\_\_\_\_

**23.** \_\_\_\_\_

**24.** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

# Spelling Grade Level Placement

## Form B

### Level 2

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

### Level 4

9. \_\_\_\_\_

10. \_\_\_\_\_

11. \_\_\_\_\_

12. \_\_\_\_\_

### Level 3

5. \_\_\_\_\_

6. \_\_\_\_\_

7. \_\_\_\_\_

8. \_\_\_\_\_

### Level 5

13. \_\_\_\_\_

14. \_\_\_\_\_

15. \_\_\_\_\_

16. \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

# Form B

## Level 6

17. \_\_\_\_\_

18. \_\_\_\_\_

19. \_\_\_\_\_

20. \_\_\_\_\_

## Level 8

25. \_\_\_\_\_

26. \_\_\_\_\_

27. \_\_\_\_\_

28. \_\_\_\_\_

## Level 7

21. \_\_\_\_\_

22. \_\_\_\_\_

23. \_\_\_\_\_

24. \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

# Phonics

## Sequence for Teaching Phonics (Spache & Spache, 1986)

| Element                       | Examples   |
|-------------------------------|--|
| Simple consonants             | b p, m, w, h, d, t, n, hard g, k, hard c, y, f   |
| Short vowels                  | a, e, i, o, u, y   |
| More difficult consonants     | v, l, z, s, r, c, q, x, j, g, s  |
| Consonant blends and digraphs | ck, ng, th, zh, sh, th, wh, ch   |
| Simple consonant blends       | with l, r, p, or t, as bl, pl, gr, br, sp, st, tr, thr, str, spl, scr                                |
| Long vowels                   | a, e, i, o, u, y   |
| Silent letters                | <u>k</u> nife, <u>w</u> rite, ta <u>k</u> , <u>g</u> nat, bla <u>k</u> , <u>h</u> our                |
| Vowel digraphs                | ai, ea, oa, ee, ey, ea   |
| Vowel diphthongs              | au, aw, oo, oo, ow, ou, oi oy, ow  |
| Vowels with r                 | ar er, ir, or, ur. Same with l and w   |
| Phonograms (rimes)            | ail, ain, all, and, ate, ay, con, eep, ell, en, ent, er est, ick, ight, ill, in, ing, ock, ter, tion |

## Neither/Nor: Resolving the Debate between Whole Language and Phonics

by Louisa Cook Moats, Ed. D.

a transcript of a lecture given at the 1996 Washington summit conference on Learning Disabilities

hosted by The National Center for Learning Disabilities, New York

Last week I was asked by a reporter, who was preparing a television documentary on literacy education in American, to explain why educators were so resistant to the lessons of science. Because he recognized that typical classroom practice was at odds with empirical evidence about literacy acquisition, the reporter was seeking to understand the curious gulf between research and school reality. As others on this program have reported,<sup>1</sup> many lessons have been learned from research about the nature of reading and writing acquisition and what needs to be one to help children who learn with difficulty. Those lessons, which are embodied in the results of the NICHD research program directed by Reid Lyon<sup>2</sup> can be summarized as follows:

- a. novice and poor readers often lack phonological sensitivity;
- b. phonological sensitivity is expressed in several ways and develops in a roughly predictable sequence;
- c. phoneme awareness is causally related to word recognition accuracy and fluency;
- d. novice and poor readers are characterized by word recognition difficulties (impairments of spelling to sound association) that impede their comprehension and development of vocabulary;
- e. these language problems are often related to a wide network of other language-related skills, including spoken language and composition, that suffer when remediation is not successful;

- f. structured, explicit, intensive language teaching is more effective than any other known intervention in treating these problems, at any age;
- g. explicit language teaching should be one part of a comprehensive and balanced program.

Although these findings need refinement, they provide a rock solid foundation on which to build a science of pedagogy. The convergence of cognitive experimental psychology, developmental psycholinguistics, applied neurosciences and educational psychology toward these principles is one of the great success stories of 20th century science. However, it is common that practitioners in education have no acquaintance with the literature that substantiates these truths. Many textbooks ignore the findings; their professors commonly reject them; and administrators have been slow to acknowledge and act on them. Curricula and standards across university reading courses often have little shared content. There seems to be no defined body of knowledge that distinguishes the profession of literacy instruction, no essential foundation which every teacher should know regardless of his or her specific role in schooling children. One can be licensed to teach without knowledge of the psychology of reading and writing, why children need specific help with language, or what specific help to give.

The fields of reading and learning disabilities have suffered from the absence of a canon, or body of truths that are known and practiced by those in the field.<sup>3</sup> Because it is an ungrounded discipline, instruction in reading and writing invites extreme points of view, overly defended practices, simplistic arguments, and political squabbling. Witness the May 13 issue of Newsweek in which Ken Goodman calls phonics proponents "right-wingers." The point that is missed in such feuding is that research provides a map for instruction that is more than a compromise between Phonics and Whole Language. Research can now guide many dimensions of spoken and written language teaching, dimensions that are interdependent, each requiring explicit and systematic attention from a teacher who understands the

relationship of the parts to the whole.<sup>4</sup> However, as the inquiring science reporter had surmised, to communicate these ideas to educators and lay persons alike seems to be a challenging task we have not yet accomplished very well.

The reporter asked the right question, one that is curiously difficult to answer. Why the scientific bases of literacy acquisition are obscured by a fog of misunderstanding is a critical issue that must be grappled with before substantive, lasting change in practice will occur. One explanatory hypothesis arises from a major difference between expert and novice readers and writers. Adults who read can do so with tacit or unconscious awareness of language structure. It is difficult for them to empathize with unskilled children because as adults their text processing is automatic. In addition, when tested directly, most adults do not display the explicit knowledge of language that would allow them to understand children's confusions or enable them to teach reading and writing to novice or poor students. As I reported in last summer's *American Educator*<sup>5</sup> even experienced teachers do not have the metalinguistic concepts about speech and print that enables informed instruction in phonology, orthography, word structure or even syntax.

Nor do adults learn those concepts from teaching experience alone. I myself taught for 10 years before I began to understand why children don't read or spell well, and that knowledge came in a graduate school classroom with a linguist. Although it is clear from research that phonology is the base of a language hierarchy, most adults do not know what a speech sound is exactly, or a syllable, a vowel, a morpheme, or even the definition of a complete sentence. When I ask, how many speech sounds in fox or boy, teachers are often unsure. Isn't it logical that this conceptual fuzziness about language structure would interfere with instruction in phonology or the relationship between speech and print? Explaining the difference between fox and rocks, or toy and toil, requires explicit conceptualization of how spelling represents speech. Even very intelligent people do not often know these things; as with



children, metalinguistic awareness is not closely related to intelligence. For example, psychologist's scores on my test of language knowledge are embarrassingly low. Nevertheless, children who experience difficulty with reading and writing benefit from accurate, detailed, organized information about the language they are struggling to master. The teachers need to be taught how to teach it.

The importance of explicit content knowledge for teaching is not limited to reading and writing. There is evidence from other disciplines such as math, science, history, and literature, that depth of teachers' content knowledge does influence teaching outcomes. Deborah Loewenberg Ball of Michigan State has repeatedly demonstrated how knowing math oneself is not the same as knowing how to teach math<sup>6</sup>. Depth of knowledge, understanding of the organization of ideas within a domain, and explicitness of knowledge affect how well teachers teach and how well students learn. It has been shown by researchers at Stanford and elsewhere that when teachers teach material they do not understand well, they will avoid the subject matter, become over-reliant on textbook prescription, present information cursorily, teach by rote, and communicate dislike of the material to students.<sup>7</sup> Perhaps phonics, grammar, and spelling are reduced to meaningless skill and drill at times because so many teachers do not have the content depth to teach it well. When language is taught actively, constructively, inductively, and collaboratively, it can be a very interesting subject for adults and students alike, including those with learning disabilities.

The broader point is this: teacher education reform must accomplish more than elevation of standards, promotion of professionalism, and changes in credentialing. New approaches such as peer coaching, portfolio construction, mentoring, teacher involvement in the construction of evaluation procedures, case study discussion in round table format, and teacher-guided observations are all needed and welcomed innovations, but they are not enough. Teachers will be truly empowered when they are taught a deep and explicit grasp of

content and its application to teaching children of all kinds. In reading and writing, that is achieved not so much by telling them about the lessons of research, but by asking them to experience and study language structure in detail.<sup>8</sup> Adults themselves need a guided tour through language space, with active exploration, before they can view children's language behavior with an educated eye.

It takes time to accomplish competency. Teaching is not telling, for adults or for children. Teachers are truly empowered and able to act with flexibility and judgment when they understand why they are doing something as well as how to do it. In teaching reading-related skills, the why includes knowing language structure and why children need to learn it, and the how comes from seeing a model, doing the task in role play, and then teaching with guided feedback. The pendulum of extremes and our vulnerability to fads may stop if we recognize that teachers want to know their stuff. We must stuff them intelligently, with depth gained from research, and recognition of the phenomena we want them to address.

1. Drs. Blachman, Lyon, and Henry especially.
2. Honig, 1996; Lyon, 1995; Share and Stanovich, 1995
3. Adams and Bruck, 1995
4. Honig, 1996
5. Moats, 1995
6. Ball, 1991
7. Grossman, Wilson, and Shuman 1989
8. Liberman, 1987

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## Why Teach Phonics? from *Teaching and Assessing Phonics*

**L**earning phonics means acquiring a body of knowledge about the relationship between written and spoken words, skill in its use, and a positive attitude towards its application in reading and writing. *Why* should students gain this knowledge? Support comes from research and long historical use.

### Support from Research

Phonic knowledge has been taught to those learning to read from the time of the Greeks to the present. Just as the Greeks found it useful to teach it to beginning readers, the research conducted in the United States over the past seventy years of more has found the same. The research indicates that students who learn phonics do better in all aspects of reading—word identification, accuracy of oral reading, and silent reading comprehension and fluency—than those who do not learn it. This also true in spelling.<sup>1</sup>

The correlation between phonic knowledge and word identification is very high, and skill in word identification is highly related to reading comprehension. In early reading, students who are better at word identification attain better comprehension because word identification and decoding are the major tasks they face. Their speaking and listening vocabularies are above their ability to recognize printed words. Hence, as they improve in word recognition and phonics, they improve in reading comprehension. Later, when students meet many new words that are beyond their speaking and listening vocabularies, it is necessary for them to be able to identify those words (and of course get their meaning) in order to comprehend what they read.

Weakness in phonics and in word recognition also tends to lead to dysfluent and slower reading because misreading words causes readers to backtrack. Fluency and automatic word identification are especially necessary as students enter the intermediate grades, when they read more difficult texts about times and places that are less familiar, more removed from their immediate experience. Their reading materials contain more difficult ideas and

more abstract and longer words. Thus, even if students' word identification skills were good for the primary grades, they face new hurdles. These hurdles are especially prevalent in content area textbooks, encyclopedias, newspapers, etc. In the English language, less familiar, abstract, and technical words are generally polysyllabic; students in the intermediate grades and beyond need to be able to rapidly decode (sound out) these polysyllabic words.

If readers have difficulty identifying words, they will lose the concentration necessary to attend to the meaning of the reading and also be less likely to infer meanings for the unknown words. Facility and ease in identifying polysyllabic words, and in inferring their meanings from a knowledge of prefixes, suffixes, and roots, help students with comprehension.

Therefore, although word identification and phonic knowledge enhance reading comprehension somewhat differently in the intermediate as compared to the primary levels, they have a strong influence in the intermediate grades, and beyond as well.

### Is Phonics Rote or Meaningful?

In the various debates on phonics, it has often been said that phonics is not meaningful—that it is a form of rote learning without thought or meaning. In truth, if taught well, phonics is a highly meaningful pursuit, but the meaning is of a different sort than that of sentences, stories, and other connected texts. What is meaningful about phonics is the meaning letters have in terms of sound—they carry the information about the sounds to be made. The correspondence between speech sounds and letters, and the rules that govern these, are meaningful. It is sometimes helpful to view reading as encompassing two kinds of meaning—the meaning of the medium (the print) and the meaning of the message (the ideas). Viewed this way, we can say that phonics gives meaning to the medium, the print, while the meanings of the words and the syntax give meaning to the message.

The two meanings—the medium and the message—are, of course, related. Phonics helps students pronounce words they do not recognize immediately. They can get close to the sound of a word and, through the sound, to the meaning. Phonics is a kind of code-breaking. As in any code-breaking, it helps if the word being decoded is in the student's oral vocabulary—that is, if its meaning is known. Yet, when decoding a word whose meaning may not be known, phonic skills are also critical. Indeed, only with a knowledge of letters and letter combinations and the sounds they represent can the reader make a reasonable try at pronouncing less common words, proper names, place names, trade and product names, and scientific and technical terms. An attempt at “sounding out” the unknown word may suggest the appropriate meaning. If the meaning of the decoded word is not known, the student learns to check its meaning through context, the dictionary, or by asking someone.

To make phonics more meaningful, several kinds of practice are important, such as reading unrecognized words in isolation, in sentences, and in connected text, as well as in signs and labels. Reading unfamiliar names and labels provides challenging and often humorous practice in acquiring phonic skills and generalizations.

It is quite embarrassing to misread names of persons and places and to be unable to make further attempts at the correct pronunciation. Many people also have difficulty using a telephone directory since they seem to be unaware that the same name can be spelled more than one way, e.g., *Schwartz* or *Shwartz*, *Beverage* or *Beveridge*, *McDonald* or *MacDonald*. Children and adults who have difficulty reading and spelling names will also tend to have difficulty locating words they hear in a dictionary. Here, too, they may have to look for the word under more than one spelling.

Meaningful readings implies more than the ability to get meaning from reading stories. It also means a growing facility in turning printed words into their spoken equivalents. Further, growth in using the medium—linking letters and sounds—enhances the acquisition of the other meaning—the meaning of the message. Similarly, the meaning of the message enhances the meaning of the medium.

### Students' Interest in Learning Phonics

Children play with language when they learn to speak words for objects in their environment: *cat* for that furry creature, *bed* for that place where we sleep, *cup* for that which holds our milk, etc., and they learn how to string words together to communicate. In learning to read, they learn another symbol system that is imposed on the spoken words—on the sounds in those words.

Children are excited about learning this medium of literacy—the letters, the sounds represented by the letters, how words are spelled, and the reasons for these. Indeed, even children of three or four are keenly interested in learning the letters, writing their names, and reading signs.

Interest in and early facility with the sounds of language (now called phonemic awareness) are also highly predictive of early reading ability. On the whole, those children who show early interest in letters, printed words, and stories turn out to be better readers. This early interest in letters, writing, and rhyming predicts reading achievement even better than oral language ability and intelligence.<sup>2</sup>

When taught well, learning the letters and the sounds they stand for is intellectually stimulating and challenging. Such learning offers children and teachers opportunities for problem solving and for making exciting discoveries about the written and spoken language. It is exciting to share in predicting and making inferences about the relationship between writing and speech. It is intellectually stimulating to invent different ways of writing the same spoken words, and to generate feasible pronunciations for the same printed words.

Our writing is alphabetic and the alphabet is the way we represent sounds in English. The study of phonics can give teachers and students a sense of the great intellectual feat of the development of alphabetic writing. According to historians, the development of the alphabet is one of the great intellectual achievements of mankind. Over four thousand years ago, speech was represented by written symbols that stood for ideas. It was a long time before writing represented speech sounds with an alphabetic system of writing. It is believed by many historians that most of the alphabetic writing systems used today evolved from one of the early ones.<sup>3</sup>

In a real sense, children who learn phonics can gain insights into the language that are similar to those of linguists who study the relationships between word pronunciation and spelling in alphabetic languages.<sup>4</sup>

Phonics is a study unto itself, valued by linguists, philologists, dictionary writers, and cryptologists, as well as by reading teachers. When used by children, its main purpose is to gain knowledge and skill in identifying words not recognized immediately. Enhanced by knowledge and skill in phonics, reading becomes more accurate and fluent, and spelling improves. Both reading and spelling are done with greater confidence and accuracy. The ultimate goal is for children to apply with ease what they learn in the phonics program to their own reading and writing—that is *why* we teach phonics.

Jeanne S. Chall and Helen M. Popp, *Teaching and Assessing Phonics: A Guide for Teachers*, available from Educators Publishing Service.

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## Three Approaches to Phonics

by John Savage

**P**honics—the study of sound-symbol relationships for the purpose of learning to read and write—is essential to children's literacy development. There are many views on phonics and at least three ways to approach it in the classroom.

### Direct, Systematic Instruction

Built directly upon the alphabetic principle, systematic phonics programs involve explicit teaching of sound-symbol relationships ("This is 'm' and it says /m/."). Children learn to blend individual sound-symbol relationships into syllables and words. The aim of direct, systematic phonics instruction is to make decoding skills automatic.

Direct and systematic programs differ one from the other. Some (like the Orton-Gillingham method) are designed for one-to-one instruction. Others (like the Bradley Reading and Language Arts Program) are designed for large group instruction. All rely heavily on a multisensory methodology with the integration of auditory, visual, kinesthetic, and tactual processing. Lessons are carefully sequenced and scripted. Many use cards that may be color coded, and some have diacritical marking systems. Children practice decoding skills with word lists or with books whose language is tightly controlled for sound-symbol consistency.

Direct, systematic phonics instruction has proven to be an effective means of helping children learn to read, especially children with language and related learning problems. The approach, however, has been criticized as being presented as "phonics for its own sake," removed from the actual process of reading. Despite criticisms, programs involving systematic phonics instruction are becoming increasingly popular as more and more schools adopt the Wilson Reading Program, WKRP, Project Read, and other systems that involve explicit instruction on letters and sounds.

### Integrated Instruction

Integrated phonics instruction involves the direct presentation of sound-symbol relationships as well, but phonics is taught as one part of an overall classroom program that may include basal readers, children's literature, and other components. Children practice elements of sound-symbol relationships in workbook programs (such as the Primary Phonics workbooks), with games, with word sorts and word building exercises, and with other activities designed to help them master the elements of their orthographic system.

Integrated instruction is typically analytic in its approach. Children are presented with lists of words containing specific phonics elements—blends, digraphs, short vowels, vowel digraphs with multiple sounds, silent letters, and the like. By analyzing these elements, children learn the sound-symbol correspondences of their language. The aim is to carry over the phonics component to other parts of the reading-writing program.

Integrated phonics is part of an overall classroom literacy program. While a separate time may be set aside for phonics instruction and practice, programs are balanced with other instructional components designed to teach reading and writing.

### Embedded Phonics

Embedded phonics involves instruction in sound-symbol relationships that is built into authentic reading experiences, those that are carried on primarily for the purpose of information or pleasure and not for the specific purpose of skill development. Children learn phonics as they engage in ongoing reading and writing in the classroom.

As part of a shared reading lesson using the popular picture book *Rosie's Walk* by Pat Hutchins, for example, the teacher might call attention to the R-/r/

correspondence in Rosie's name or start with the word hen and build a word family lesson involving the phonogram -en. Embedded phonics doesn't typically start with sound-symbol elements. It begins with story and builds phonics into the lesson. Some children's trade books lend themselves especially well to embedded phonics instruction. Nancy Shaw's "Sheep" books (Sheep on a Ship, Sheep in a Jeep, etc.) delight children while they emphasize repeated orthographic patterns that children need to learn.

Phonics is naturally embedded in writing instruction. As the class composes and dictates morning messages ("Today is Tuesday"), the teacher highlights the sound-symbol relationships inherent in the writing. And as children independently write stories about balloons and baboons, they need to master elements of their orthographic system in order to encode language. Phonics is at least as important in learning to spell as it is in learning to read.

Embedded phonics makes decoding an integral part of authentic reading and writing experiences. However, this approach lacks the structure that other approaches have, and some worry that too much room exists for children to "fall between the cracks." Phonics instruction is consciously built into shared reading, guided reading, and other authentic experiences that use children's trade books. Although mastery of sound-symbol relationships is not the starting point of the lesson, embedded phonics is an effective way to use decoding strategies as part of real reading experiences.

### Different Options for Different Children

Different approaches to phonics offer teachers different options in light of different children's needs. All aim at helping children become competent and confident readers and writers.

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## The Place of Phonics in the Total Reading Program

### from *Teaching and Assessing Phonics*

#### Language, Cognition, and Word Identification

Phonics and other word identification skills should comprise only a part of the total reading program—a much larger part for beginners than for more advanced readers. One way to keep this in mind is to view reading itself as composed of three interrelated major components: language, cognition, and word identification.<sup>1</sup>

Before students learn to read, their language and cognitive abilities are considerable. Six-year-olds have speaking and listening vocabularies of 6,000 or more words, and they can understand, when heard, books that are far more advanced than they can read. At the beginning reading stage, decoding written words to their spoken counterparts usually leads directly to comprehension; most of the words in the selections are in their speaking and listening vocabularies, the syntax is within their language development, and the message of the paragraph or story is usually not beyond their cognitive abilities. Phonics is one of the techniques taught to enable beginning students to read the language they already use and understand.

Word recognition based on visual or picture clues and context also helps. Instruction in phonics, however, gives students a more powerful tool for identifying words—one that is more reliable than other word recognition techniques. Thus, phonics plays a major role in the reading program for the beginning reader.

Phonic instruction, to be effective, must provide the skills that can be applied to reading and writing stories and other selections. Since phonics is a tool for unlocking word pronunciation and for spelling words, its true value is realized only when applied to reading and writing, even at the earliest state.

The focus on phonics and word recognition—with accuracy, speed, and confidence—should enable students to read independently and with understanding, as early as possible, books that are interesting and informative.

When the basic phonic skills and rules are mastered, they

can be used in an almost unconscious way. Students can also write words that can be identified by others, although the spelling may not always be correct.

As their word identification abilities begin to match their language and cognitive abilities, students can read materials of increasing difficulty. At more advanced reading levels, a good vocabulary and expanding general knowledge help the student further in identifying words automatically. Throughout, one needs to balance teaching and learning phonics with reading a variety of increasingly difficult texts. Such reading is necessary to expose students to words that are not identified immediately.

A caution—phonics teaching may also be overdone. It is easy to teach more letter-sound correspondences and phonic generalizations than are productive. A balance is necessary. Similarly, a program of book reading that excludes any phonic instruction may be equally weak by denying students an opportunity to gain the phonic knowledge necessary for identifying unknown or unfamiliar words. Most students will profit from a program that includes phonic instruction, independent reading and discussion of literature, creative writing, and spelling.

#### Phonics and Whole Language Programs

A whole language approach to reading instruction views reading development as occurring in a natural environment where learning to speak, read, listen, and write is coordinated. It tends to view learning to read as a natural process—one that is similar to learning to talk. The focus is on meaning and, for beginners, whole language teachers tend to favor books where the words are predictable and have rich context. Although phonics is not rejected, it is not generally taught systematically because it is assumed that phonics is best learned by reading books and environmental print (such as street signs and billboards). The position taken by most whole language proponents is that phonics should be learned incidentally and “as needed.” Indeed, many whole

language proponents have tended to think that if phonics is taught out of the context of stories, it will deter the development of meaningful reading.<sup>2</sup> There is, however, a growing recognition and appreciation by many whole language advocates that young children develop phonemic awareness early. This awareness, they find, enhances the learner's ability to write, spell, and read.<sup>3</sup> Hence, instructional techniques that enhance phonemic awareness are being incorporated into whole language programs.

The focus is somewhat different in writing. Indeed, it has been thought for some time that a child's use of invented spelling leads to the natural discovery of sound-letter relations. When teachers write the conventional spelling for a child's invented spelling, they are reinforcing the idea that letters correspond to sounds and that they are rule governed. Calling attention to specific sound-letter correspondences will make this learning more explicit. The knowledge and skill students gain from such instruction provides a bridge to more mature reading and writing and to reading more difficult texts.

We believe that a structured phonics program, using the components described in the preceding sections, can fit into a whole language program. If a teacher chooses, however, to restrict phonics teaching to a more "on demand" approach, its effectiveness will depend greatly on his or her knowledge of phonics, skilled use of that knowledge, and sensitivity to the children's successes and failures. Teachers are always a strong determinant in children's learning. Indeed, the more flexible and open the methods used, the more influential the teacher becomes. Thus, particularly in a whole language classroom using incidental phonics instruction, it is essential that teachers are highly knowledgeable and skillful with regard to phonics and how it fits into student reading.

A procedure for incorporating phonics in whole language programs is outlined by Phyllis Trachtenburg.<sup>4</sup> For instance, she suggests teaching /ʔ/ (short a) to children who need it after reading a particular book. The teacher explains that the students are to learn a sound that the letter [a] stands for. She then prints a sample of the text from that book which gives many examples of the [a] to /ʔ/ correspondence and proceeds to teach it: underlining the letter, giving the sound in isolation and in the words; having the students for /ʔ/ and then having them repeat

that sound in isolation and in words in the story; suggesting helpful cues such as "/ʔ/ as in apple"; guiding student practice in creating words with medial /ʔ/ in phonograms such as *at, an, am*; and building sentences using adjectives containing /ʔ/ and sentence clauses. Then the teacher presents a new book that contains many examples of /ʔ/ in the context and supports student participation in reading it.

### The Relationship Between Writing/Spelling and Phonics

Much of the recent research on early reading has found that interest in writing appears to precede interest in reading. Dolores Durkin, in her study of children who learned to read before they entered school, found that high proportion of these children showed interest not only in books and being read to, but in the letters, printed words, and writing.<sup>5</sup> She called them "paper-and-pencil kids." Earlier, Millie Almy also found that those first graders who made good progress in reading were interested in letters and print as well as in being read to.<sup>6</sup>

More recently, Glenda Bissex, in her study of the writing and reading development of her son when he was fit to ten years of age, found that his early writing helped him gain insight into decoding and encoding (writing) words.<sup>7</sup> This was also the conclusion reached by Charles Read and Carol Chomsky.<sup>8</sup> With this knowledge, children have been observed to sound out the words they wish to write. As they try different letters to represent the sounds of these words, they become more aware that the letters represent sounds, and gain insight into the alphabetic principle. Their spelling is not conventional, as they often use the names of letters to replicate sounds in words rather than the sounds the letters represent. In spite of these differences, the practice of writing and sounding is excellent preparation for learning conventional spelling and phonics.

Invented spelling studies reinforce the recommendation to teach the names of the letters early. Knowledge of letter names will also help teachers and children communicate about reading and spelling. Once all the letters are learned, the children should be encouraged to write words as they hear them, and later as they are spelled conventionally. Indeed, in the Bissex study, her son sought conventional spellings in first grade, after using invented spellings in kindergarten, as have children in other studies. Early facility with writing contributes to

the ease with which children learn conventional phonics and spelling.

Early writing also illustrates an important principle of learning and teaching: that learning is cumulative. Without knowing the alphabet letters and their names, children could not spontaneously use them in writing and invented spelling. Nor could they take up writing without developing auditory and visual discrimination in skills.

During the earliest years, various language activities are important for the development of reading skills. Reading nursery rhymes to children, which serves to share our literary heritage, is also useful in developing their sensitivity to rhymes and the segmentation of words. Thus, we must look not only to the teaching and learning of the finished products—writing and reading comprehension—but to the prior learning on which they are based.

For spelling instruction, words can be dictated that use the letter-sound correspondences previously taught to make students more conscious of the separate letters and of the fact that just one different letter (or sound) at the beginning, middle, or end of a word makes a different word. It is also useful to dictate words that are not known, but whose spelling can be reasoned by analogy. Thus, if the students have practiced reading *cat*, *bat*, and *sat*, the teacher can dictate new words such as *fat*, *bat*,

*mat*, *pat*, and *rat*, or even less familiar or nonsense words such as *gat*, *tat*, *zat*, and *vat*.

Achievement in spelling and phonics is closely associated in the early grades. Those children who are good in phonics are usually good in spelling. And those who are good in phonics and spelling are usually good in word recognition, oral reading accuracy, and silent reading comprehension.

### Why Do Some Phonics Programs Fail?

A phonics program may fail to give students the skills necessary to become good readers if those skills are insufficiently practiced, and if phonics is not adequately balanced with reading of texts. Teachers should not forget that the purpose of learning phonics is to help in the accurate and efficient identification of words when reading for comprehension.

A phonics program may also fail if it tries to teach too many elements and rules, no matter how useful they may be. Similarly, if knowledge gained in the phonics program is applied too strictly, as if it were the true and best way to identify every word, the program may fall short of expectation.

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# Sequence of Skills

Levels K - 3

Phonics

•

Comprehension

•

Structural Analysis

•

Vocabulary

•

Study Skills

## Sequence of Structural Analysis

Student recognizes 's', 'es', and 'es' with 'y' and 'i' as plural markers.

Student recognizes root words

Student is able to match contractions to the expanded form

Student is able to separate compound words into smaller words

Student is able to recognize 's as sign of the singular possessive and s' as sign of the plural possessive

Student is able to determine number of syllables he hears in a word

One and two syllable words

Three and four syllable words

## Oral Reading Sequence

Student is able to read sight words

## Sequence of Vocabulary Skills

Student is able to name shapes

Student is able to name colors

Student is able to give the names of numbers

Student is able to give correct antonym

Student is able to select appropriate meaning of underlined multiple meaning words

Student is able to select the correct homonym

Student is able to select the correct synonym

## Sequence of Comprehension Skills

Student sequences three or four pictures in order

Student sequences three and four sentences

Student sequences four and five sentences

Student sequences five or more sentences

Student understands concepts

Student is able to follow written directions isolation

Student is able to follow two written directions in specified sequence

Student is able to follow two or more written directions in specified sequence

Student is able to draw a conclusion after seeing sequence of two pictures

Student is able to draw a conclusion after seeing sequence of three pictures

Student is able to draw a conclusion after reading a series of sentences

Student is able to recall details after a passage is read to him

Student is able to give the main idea or topic after a passage is read to him

Student is able to make an inference after a passage is read to him

Student is able to distinguish between realistic fiction and fantasy after a passage is read to him

Student is able to follow three oral directions.

Student is able to follow four oral directions.

Student can circle three words (that have something in common) from a group of four words

Student can distinguish between fact and opinion when reading factual essays, reports, editorials, advertisements, etc.

When given a model, student is able to make an analogy by selecting the fourth word from a list of three

Student is able to use contextual clues in getting meaning of new or affixed known words

### Sequence of Study Skills

Student is able to supply missing letter in alphabetic grouping of three letters

Student is able to alphabetize a group of letters

Student is able to alphabetize a list of five short words beginning with different letters

Student is able to alphabetize a list of five short words beginning with the same letter

Student is able to read simple maps

Student is able to use guidewords to find correct page for word entry

Student is able to choose best definition of word to fit sentence context

# Sequence of Skills

Levels 4 - 6

Phonics

•

Comprehension

•

Structural Analysis

•

Vocabulary

•

Study Skills



## Sequence of Skills for Phonics

Student distinguishes **initial consonant** sounds

Student identifies letters for **initial consonant** sounds

Student identifies letter combination for **blends and diagraphs** in **initial position**

Student identifies correct **blend** for **final sound** of dictated words

Student identifies **long and short vowels** (**medial position**) which is heard in dictated words

Student is able to read words with **three-letter blends** in the **initial key word**

Student is able to read words containing **vowel blends**

Student is able to read words which contain **R-controlled vowels**

Student is able to select words with the same sound of **"g"** or **"c"** in **key word**

Student is able to read **root word** with **common final syllables** added

## Sequence of Comprehension Skills

Student is able to recall details after reading a passage

Student is able to give the main idea or topic, after reading a passage

Student is able to predict outcomes after reading a paragraph

Student is able to follow written directions

Student is able to make inference after reading a passage

Student is able to use connecting words to sequence five or more sentences

Student is able to distinguish between fact and opinion when reading factual essays, reports, editorials, and advertisements

Student is able to identify pronoun antecedent after reading a passage

Student is able to make an analogy after being given a model

Student understands the author's point of view after reading a passage

Student is able to determine cause and effect relationships after reading a passage

Student is able to interpret time and setting after reading a passage.

## Sequence of Skills for Structural Analysis

Student is able to give expanded form of contractions

Student is able to separate compound words into smaller words

Student is able to identify prefixes

Student is able to identify suffixes

Student is able to identify root words when prefixes and/or suffixes have been added

Student is able to correctly select word to complete the sentence when prefixes or suffixes have been added

Student is able to select correct comparative form

Student is able to determine number of syllables in a word

Student is able to divide words into syllables

## Sequence of Vocabulary Skills

Student is able to select the correct **antonym** for a given word

Student is able to select the correct **homonym** to fit the context

Student is able to select the appropriate meaning of a word on the basis of the **context** of the sentence

Student is able to correctly select the **meaning of an unfamiliar word** on the basis of the it is used in a sentence

Student is able to select the correct **synonym** for a given word

## **Sequence of Study Skills**

### **Dictionary Skills**

Student is able to **alphabetize** word that begin with the same letter or letters

Student is able to use **guide words** when locating words in the dictionary

Student is able to use **pronunciation key** of the dictionary to pronounce new words

### **Reference**

Student is able to use **table of contents** to locate information

Student is able to use an **index** to locate information on a specific topic

Student is able to **locate** information in an encyclopedia

Student is able to **determine appropriate topic** when locating information in an encyclopedia

Student is able to **read a question and determine the best reference to use**

Student is able to **read a question and determine the best reference source to use**

### **Maps, Graphs**

Student is able to use **charts and graphics** to answer factual question and make interpretations

Student is able to use **map legend** to answer questions

Student is able to use **maps** to answer factual questions and make interpretations

Student is able to **locate places on a map** using coordinates of that map

## **Comprehension Skills**

Beginning instruction in reading focuses on two aspects simultaneously: mastery of the mechanical aspects of reading and comprehension. After the mechanical aspects of reading have been mastered, comprehension skills are further developed through increased understanding and use of the printed page. Reading instruction from this point on concentrates on helping the student understand and interpret what he or she reads.

## **Understanding and Interpreting Meaning**

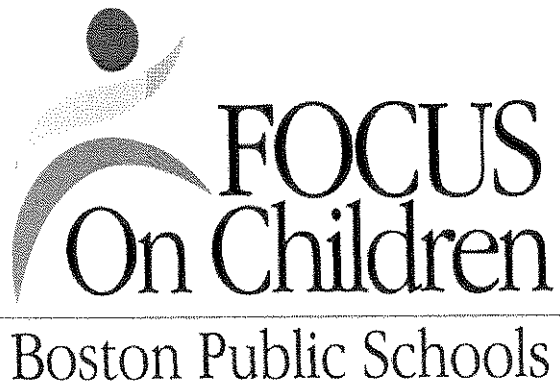
Each of the following processes and skills is involved in the comprehension of written matter:

- Understanding literal meaning of words, sentences, selections
- Understanding the meaning of punctuation marks
- Relating the story, telling what happened first, what happened then, and what happened last
- Getting the main thought
- Following instructions
- Seeing relationships and making comparisons
- Predicting outcomes and solutions
- Understanding meaning of figurative language
- Drawing conclusions
- Making generalizations
- Seeing cause and effect

## **Critical Reading**

In order to read with discrimination, the student should have guidance and practice in the following:

- Distinguishing the significant from the trivial, relevant from irrelevant, fact from opinion
- Evaluating material read from the reader's own experience and from other criteria
- Determining the writer's point of view
- Reading widely on controversial issues
- Maintaining an objective and inquiring point of view



# Kindergarten

## **CITYWIDE LEARNING STANDARDS**

### **GRADE LEVEL SUMMARY:**

English Language Arts, History & Social Studies,  
Math, Science & Technology

# BPS CITYWIDE LEARNING STANDARDS: KINDERGARTEN

## INTRODUCTION



### Goals

The Boston Public Schools Citywide Learning Standards are designed to produce *independent learners* who are encouraged to:

- Think, question, and communicate
- Gain and apply knowledge
- Work and contribute in meaningful, purposeful ways.

Students *think, question, and communicate* to make sense or meaning of their world and experiences.

*Thinking* includes being able to internalize new ideas and connect them to familiar concepts and prior knowledge.

*Questioning* includes the framing of thoughtful questions, and the pursuit of these questions until the student fully understands.

*Communicating* means putting learning into the language of speech or writing, and requires reflection in such forms as examination, clarification, analysis, and synthesis.

Students *gain and apply knowledge* to pursue ideas and experiences, and apply this new knowledge in real life contexts. This pursuit is interactive by nature. The more collaborative and experiential it is, the more powerful the learning.

Students' *work needs to be meaningful and purposeful*. The process and products of student work need to be valued contributions to the school and community, and the student. Embedded in powerful learning experiences are notions of persistence, self-discipline, hard work, effort, and pride in producing quality work.

### Teaching and Learning in the Boston Public Schools

Learning is an active, constructive, creative, and often collaborative process that involves a variety of distinct cognitive strategies. Skillful learners use these strategies, largely unconsciously, to access content through text or other media, to make meaning of the content, to make connections with and apply the content in thoughtful and meaningful ways, and to retain the content for later use. In learning these strategies and coming to own them, students learn *how* to learn in addition to acquiring important knowledge. These strategies include the following:

*Skillful learners....*

- Read, write, and think a lot about topics and ideas of importance to them.
- Set goals or purposes for their learning.
- Make personal connections between the content and other knowledge, experiences, text, or media.
- Ask questions as they read, listen, or view.
- Clarify the meaning of words or content they don't understand.
- Listen or watch for important elements, themes, or issues.
- Create sensory images.
- Make predictions, inferences and judgments.
- Get "in the shoes" of characters or participants.



- Create ongoing summaries or syntheses.
- Build on their understandings by sharing and discussing them with others.
- Assess their learning and make mid-course corrections.

Because we know this is how people learn, the system supports the *workshop* approach to teaching and learning. The workshop approach helps teachers organize their classrooms and instructional time to teach effective reading, writing, and learning strategies and to help students put them into practice. The most important goal of this approach is the development of *independent learners* who are equipped with the skills and knowledge they will need for a lifetime of learning.

The workshop approach derives from the insight that people learn best by doing and that teachers often need to provide students with more time to read, write, and use effective learning strategies to explore and understand the content they are studying. The approach also derives from the insight that students need to share in the ownership of the curriculum to increase their investment, engagement, and motivation. Students need to participate in the selection of “just right” books for independent and small group reading and writing activities, and they need to explore, read, and write about topics and ideas of importance to them (as well as the curriculum).

The workshop approach uses a mixture of whole-class, small group, partner, and one-on-one instruction that centers on conversations about content, strategies, and work routines. Each of these varied approaches to teaching and learning is essential to students’ development as independent readers, writers, and learners.

## The Habits of Mind and Work

The following habits enable effective learning and are essential to students' success in school.

Developing these habits in students is the responsibility of every teacher, administrator, and other adult involved in the lives of our children.

- **Curiosity and Critical Thinking:** Students listen attentively, observe carefully, and ask thoughtful questions until they understand; they look for good evidence.
- **Respect for Diversity:** Students recognize and value racial, ethnic, cultural, age, gender, and individual commonalities and differences; they respect other people's points of view.
- **Consideration and Compassion:** Students treat themselves and others with care and respect; they build trusting relationships; they help, care for, and share with one another.
- **Collaboration:** Students work well with others, give and accept constructive criticism, try to be fair, and try to solve problems in a reasonable, peaceful manner.
- **Self-Direction:** Students check their own work, invite the critical response of others, and make appropriate adjustments.
- **Perseverance:** Students work hard until the job is done right, and are patient when the answers do not come quickly.
- **Initiative:** Students try new things, take reasonable risks, and reflect on their successes and mistakes.
- **Courage:** Students stand up for their rights and the rights of others in a positive manner that shows self-respect and respect for others; they resist harmful pressure.
- **Responsibility:** Students demonstrate personal responsibility and pursue important goals for themselves and their schools.

# ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS--KINDERGARTEN

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## Speaking and Listening

*The students will be able to:*

- Take turns during conversations and discussions
- Listen to others during conversations and discussions
- Follow directions of teacher or student leader
- Listen for information
- Talk about an event expressing feelings and opinions from own experiences
- Tell a personal story with appropriate expression and clarity
- Understand that the purpose of language is communication
- Retell a familiar story with expression
- Listen to and appreciate the rhyme, rhythm and language in poems, chants, songs, nursery rhymes
- Recite familiar poems, chants, songs, and rhymes
- Engage in and observe dramatizations of familiar and new stories
- Generate questions about a topic
- Tell what is understood about a story or presentation
- Ask questions about a story or presentation
- Make comments on a story or presentation
- Enjoy talking with peers

## Language Use

*The students will be able to:*

- Increase vocabulary through pictures and experience
- Gain word meaning from stories, discussions and word games
- Acquire new concepts through concrete learning
- Use new vocabulary and grammatical constructions in own speech
- Use descriptive words in conjunction with people, objects, events, and actions
- Use words that describe spatial and temporal relationships
- Understand that words have meanings
- Begin to recognize that commonly used vocabulary (e.g., “pizza” “taco”) comes from other languages
- Ask about words and concepts not understood
- Demonstrate orally that phonemes exist and that they can be isolated and manipulated
- Link some letters and sounds
- Understand that words are made up of one or more syllables
- Recognize and produce rhyming sounds
- Blend sounds to make words
- Notice sound patterns in groups of words
- Sort words according to sound patterns
- Find pleasure in playing with words

## **Reading and Literature**

### **Beginning Reading**

*The students will be able to:*

- Recognize that printed materials provide information or entertaining stories
- Know how to handle a book and turn pages
- Identify covers and title page of book
- Understand meaning of title, author, illustrator
- Recognize that in English print moves left to right and top to bottom on page
- Identify most upper and lower case letter
- Match voice to print
- Use letter-sound knowledge to identify unfamiliar words in print and gain meaning
- Use pictures to make predictions about text
- Use knowledge of language to make sense of text
- Practice reading predictable books with patterned text
- Know some resources for finding information about a topic (library, encyclopedia, individuals to interview etc.)

### **Responding to Literature**

*The students will be able to:*

- Understand simple story structure (main events, characters, problem, solution)
- Retell one or more events from story recently told or read aloud
- Compare several stories by the same author
- Compare and contrast different versions of the same story
- Listen and react to a variety of genre, including poetry, fiction, nonfiction, drama
- Recognize that genre represent different ways of telling stories and conveying ideas
- Identify poetry, fiction and nonfiction
- Identify the main ideas of a piece of literature using evidence from text as support
- Compare personal event, attribute or environment to those of characters in story
- Use background knowledge, story content, illustrations, and text patterns to build meaning
- Use nonfiction to gain information
- Gain familiarity with traditional fables and folktales, include those from various cultures
- Identify different multicultural versions of the classics
- Gain pleasure from reading
- Choose to read

## **Writing**

*The students will be able to:*

- Compose texts with drawings and some letter formations
- Understand that written words are composed of letters that represent sounds
- Use letters to represent sounds
- Use a combination of upper and lower case letters in writing
- Begin to compose stories at own development level
- Use initial, final and medial sounds in writing words
- Attempt to reread own writing
- Create writing that sounds like talk

- Begin to include storybook language in writing
- Become familiar with a variety of reasons to write and forms for doing so (lists, letters, stories, recipes, etc.)
- Recognize that revising is making something you have written better
- Practice crossing out and changing while writing
- Write own name, some high frequency words and most of the alphabet
- Leave space between words
- Use a caret to indicate an addition to writing
- Name and uses basic punctuation marks in writing
- Gather information about topic
- Build a repertoire of some conventionally spelled words
- Choose to write
- Take pride in own writing

## Media

*The students will be able to:*

- Understand that media can portray fact or fiction and the viewer must decide which it is
- Critically review information from the media
- Use media to transmit and receive messages and information
- Create scripts and productions of what has been learned



# **Multiple Intelligences**

## Gardner's Multiple Intelligences

Gardner chose to look at learning styles in a different light. Winters (1995) and Wang (1996) provided the following summary of Gardner's Multiple Intelligences:

- plays with words (Verbal/Linguistic)
- plays with questions (Logical/Mathematical)
- plays with pictures (Visual/Spatial)
- plays with music (Music/Rhythmic)
- plays with moving (Body/Kinesthetic)
- plays with socializing (Interpersonal)
- plays alone (Intrapersonal)

Again, each of us uses some of these styles when learning, but we tend to prefer a small number of methods over the rest.

## Multiple Intelligences

- **Inter/Intrapersonal Intelligence**

**Interpersonal learners** understand the moods and motivations of others enabling them to work and communicate effectively.

They enjoy social activities

**Intrapersonal learners** have a deep awareness of their own inner feelings. They have a strong sense of independence and self-confidence.

- **Bodily-Kinesthetic Intelligence**

Students who possess bodily-kinesthetic intelligence have the ability to work skillfully with objects involving both fine and gross motor skills. They are characterized by a well-developed sense of balance and motor control. In addition, they are skillful at translating intention into action. These students learn best by doing.

- **Visual-spatial Intelligence**

Spatial intelligence is characterized by a person's capacity to perceive the visual world and recreate aspects of it even in the absence of relevant stimuli. This intelligence is fundamentally tied to the concrete world and the location of objects in that world. Thorough spatial intelligence grows most directly out of one's observations of the visual world, it can develop in a blind individual and, therefore, visual and spatial are not inextricably linked.

- **Musical/Naturalist Intelligence**

No other intelligence emerges earlier than musical talent. Those who possess high levels of musical or rhythmic intelligence constantly hear tones, rhythm, and musical patterns in the environment and human voice, as well as music. The auditory sense is crucial, although not mandatory. People with naturalist intelligence have an appreciation for the natural world around them. They possess the ability to classify and distinguish plants and animals in the environment.

- **Logical-Mathematical Intelligence**

The logical-mathematical intelligence initially develops through observation, manipulation, and handling of physical objects. In time, the thinking becomes more abstract. This intelligence is closely related to scientific thinking and deductive reasoning. Students possessing this intelligence have the ability to recognize patterns, work with abstract symbols, and see relationships. They also have an intuition about solving problems, often seeing a solution before actually working out the problem. As with linguistic intelligence, students who possess this intelligence are often perceived as being very smart because standardized tests focus on math skills.

- **Verbal-Linguistic Intelligence**

The power and love of the written and spoken word is at the heart of this intelligence. Reading, writing, listening, and speaking are the activities that represent this intelligence. Students who display this intelligence to a high degree are sensitive to the sounds and meanings of words and are typically very good at decoding. Additionally, these students are seen as being very bright because school tasks and standardized tests tend to emphasize this intelligence. Linguistic intelligence is the most democratically and widely shared. While, for example, a musician or artist exhibit abilities that seem mysterious to the average person, a poet or author is seen as possessing to a higher degree what most of us have within us.

- **Existential Intelligence**

Students with existential intelligence are attuned to the human condition. They are able to comprehend issues like the significance of life and death and the experience of love.



# Activities for Multiple Intelligences

## Interpersonal Activities

- Interview another student
- Conduct a survey
- Lead group discussions
- Play a game with a friend
- Write a story with a partner
- Tutor a friend

## Bodily-Kinesthetic Intelligence

- Pantomime an activity, task, or chore
- Play a sport
- Play charades
- Act out a scene from a novel
- Perform a dance to express an emotion
- Learn sign language
- Plan and present a puppet show
- Go on a nature hike
- Go on a scavenger hunt
- Exercise

## Visual-Spatial Intelligence

- Play chess
- Guess the mystery object inside a bag
- Make a map of your neighborhood
- Make a diorama
- Paint a picture that represents a story
- Make a video of an event
- Create a poster to express your thoughts on a current event
- Create a mental image of the setting of a book
- Put together a jigsaw puzzle
- Wear a blindfold and try to walk around in a room
- Daydream about a vacation
- Create a sculpture
- Solve a maze, play a board game

### **Musical Activities**

- Write a song
- Write an advertising jingle
- Sing a song to the class
- Make up a cheer
- Attend a symphony
- Make a list of songs that calm, stimulate, or inspire you
- Tap the musical pattern or count the number of beats in a song
- Have a parade
- Make a musical instrument
- Play a musical instrument
- Sing or recite a nursery rhyme
- Add sound effects to a story

### **Naturalist Activities**

- Go on a nature hike
- Plant a garden
- Create an animal collage
- Identify leaf tracings
- Present a plant exhibit
- Learn the names of flowers
- Develop an animal card game
- Make a habitat diorama
- Plan a nature scavenger hunt for friends and family
- Listen to the sounds of nature on a tape
- Diagram the stars and constellation in the night sky

### **Logical-Mathematical Intelligence**

- Solve a math problem using manipulatives
- Add, subtract, multiply, or divide numbers
- Make something using a recipe
- Create a pattern with manipulatives
- Conduct a scientific experiment
- Mentally compute equations
- Create a Venn diagram for a topic you are studying
- Make an animal using tangrams
- Create a time line
- Play a counting game such as Mancala

### **Logical-Mathematical continued.....**

- Compare and contrast two or more objects
- Solve analogies (leaves are to trees like petals are to....)
- Make a graph to represent data
- Build something with blocks
- Classify objects
- Write a math story problem
- Play checkers
- Do a brain teaser
- Create an outline for a topic you are studying
- Measure several objects in the classroom

### **Verbal-Linguistic Intelligence**

- Write poetry
- Read with a partner
- Solve a crossword puzzle
- Retell a story to a friend
- Write in a journal
- Learn a new word each day
- Listen to a lecture and take notes
- Give oral instructions for completing a task
- Write an acrostic poem
- Give a dramatic reading
- Write a sequel to a story
- Create a class newspaper
- Write and give a persuasive speech
- Solve scrambled words
- Write to a pen pal
- Participate in a debate
- Listen to a taped recording of a book
- Write a book review
- Write and perform a comedy routine
- Become a storyteller for a younger class
- Write a script for a television show
- Read a daily newspaper
- Create a tongue twister

## Multiple Intelligence Inventory for Adults

Directions for administering the MI Inventory for adults

Check those statements that apply in each intelligence category. Use these intelligence categories to help you understand the types of intelligence you possess and your strengths and weaknesses.

Space at the end of each intelligence allows you to write additional information not specifically referred to in the inventory.

## MI Inventory for Adults

### Body/Kinesthetic Intelligence

- ☐ I engage in at least one sport or physical activity on a regular basis.
- ☐ I find it difficult to sit still for long periods of time.
- ☐ I like working with my hands at concrete activities such as sewing, weaving, carving, carpentry, or model building.
- ☐ My best ideas often come to me when I'm out for a long walk or a jog, or when I'm engaged in some other kind of physical activity.
- ☐ I often like to spend my free time outdoors.
- ☐ I frequently use hand gestures or other forms of body language when conversing with someone.
- ☐ I need to touch things in order to learn more about them.
- ☐ I enjoy daredevil amusement rides or similar thrilling physical experiences.
- ☐ I would describe myself as well coordinated.
- ☐ I need to practice a new skill rather than simply reading about it or seeing a video that describes it.

**Other Body/Kinesthetic Strengths:**

### Interpersonal Intelligence

- ☐ I'm the sort of person that people come to for advice and counsel at work or in my neighborhood.
- ☐ I prefer group sports like badminton, volleyball, or softball to solo sports such as swimming and jogging.
- ☐ When I have a problem, I'm more likely to seek out another person for help than attempt to work it out on my own.
- ☐ I have at least three close friends.
- ☐ I favor social pastimes such as Monopoly or bridge over individual recreations such as video games and solitaire.
- ☐ I enjoy the challenge of teaching another person, or groups of people, what I know how to do.
- ☐ I consider myself a leader (or others have called me that).
- ☐ I feel comfortable in the midst of a crowd.
- ☐ I like to get involved in social activities connected with my work, church, or community.
- ☐ I would rather spend my evenings at a lively party than stay at home alone.

**Other Interpersonal Strengths:**

## **Intra-personal Intelligence**

- ☐ I regularly spend time alone meditating, reflecting, or thinking about important life questions.
- ☐ I have attended counseling sessions or personal growth seminars to learn more about myself.
- ☐ I am able to respond to setbacks with resilience.
- ☐ I have a special hobby or interest that I keep pretty much to myself.
- ☐ I have some important goals for my life that I think about on a regular basis.
- ☐ I have a realistic view of my strengths and weaknesses (borne out by feedback from other sources).
- ☐ I would prefer to spend a weekend alone in a cabin in the woods rather than at a fancy resort with lots of people around.
- ☐ I consider myself to be strong willed or independent minded.
- ☐ I keep a personal diary or journal to record the events of my inner life.
- ☐ I am self-employed or have at least thought seriously about starting my own business.

**Other Intra-personal Strengths:**

## **Logical/Mathematical Intelligence**

- ☐ I can easily compute numbers in my head.
- ☐ Math and/or science were among my favorite subjects in school.
- ☐ I enjoy playing games or solving brainteasers that require logical thinking.
- ☐ I like to set up little "what if" experiments (i.e. "What if I double the amount of water I give my rosebush each week?")
- ☐ My mind searches for patterns, regularities, or logical sequences in things.
- ☐ I'm interested in new developments in science.
- ☐ I believe that almost everything has a rational explanation.
- ☐ I sometimes think in clear abstract, wordless, imageless concepts.
- ☐ I like finding logical flaws in things that people say and do at home and work.
- ☐ I feel more comfortable when something has been measured, categorized, analyzed, or quantified in some way.

**Other Logical/Mathematical Strengths:**

## **Musical/Rhythmic Intelligence**

- ☐ I have a pleasant singing voice.
- ☐ I can tell when a musical note is off-key.
- ☐ I frequently listen to music on the radio, cassette tapes or compact discs.
- ☐ I play a musical instrument.
- ☐ My life would be poorer if there were no music in it.
- ☐ I sometimes catch myself walking around with a jingle or other tune running through my mind.
- ☐ I can easily keep time to a piece of music with a simple percussion instrument.
- ☐ I know the tunes to many different songs or music pieces.
- ☐ If I hear a musical selection once or twice, I am usually able to sing it back fairly accurately.
- ☐ I often make tapping sounds or sing little melodies while working, studying, or learning something new.

**Other Musical/Rhythmic Strengths:**

## **Verbal/Linguistic Intelligence**

- ☐ Books are very important to me.
- ☐ I can hear words in my head before I read, speak, or write them down.
- ☐ I get more out of listening to the radio or a spoken-word cassette than I do from television or films.
- ☐ I enjoy word games like Scrabble, Boggle, Anagrams, or Password.
- ☐ I enjoy entertaining myself or others with tongue twisters, nonsense rhymes, or puns.
- ☐ Other people sometimes have to stop and ask me to explain the meaning of the words I use in my writing and speaking.
- ☐ English, social studies, and history were easier for me in school than math and science.
- ☐ When I drive down a freeway, I pay more attention to the words written on signs than to the scenery.
- ☐ My conversation includes frequent references to things that I've read or heard.
- ☐ I've written something recently that I was particularly proud of or that earned me recognition from others.

**Other Verbal/Linguistic Strengths:**

## Visual/Spatial Intelligence

- ☐ I often see clear visual images when I close my eyes.
- ☐ I'm sensitive to color.
- ☐ I frequently use a camera or camcorder to record what I see around me.
- ☐ I enjoy doing jigsaw puzzles, mazes, and other visual puzzles.
- ☐ I have vivid dreams at night.
- ☐ I can generally find my way around unfamiliar territory.
- ☐ I like to draw or doodle.
- ☐ Geometry was easier for me than algebra in school.
- ☐ I can comfortably imagine how something might appear if it were looked down upon from directly above in a bird's-eye view.
- ☐ I prefer looking at reading material that is heavily illustrated.

**Other Visual/Spatial Strengths:**



# **Sample Lessons**

# KEY QUESTIONS IN LESSON PLANNING

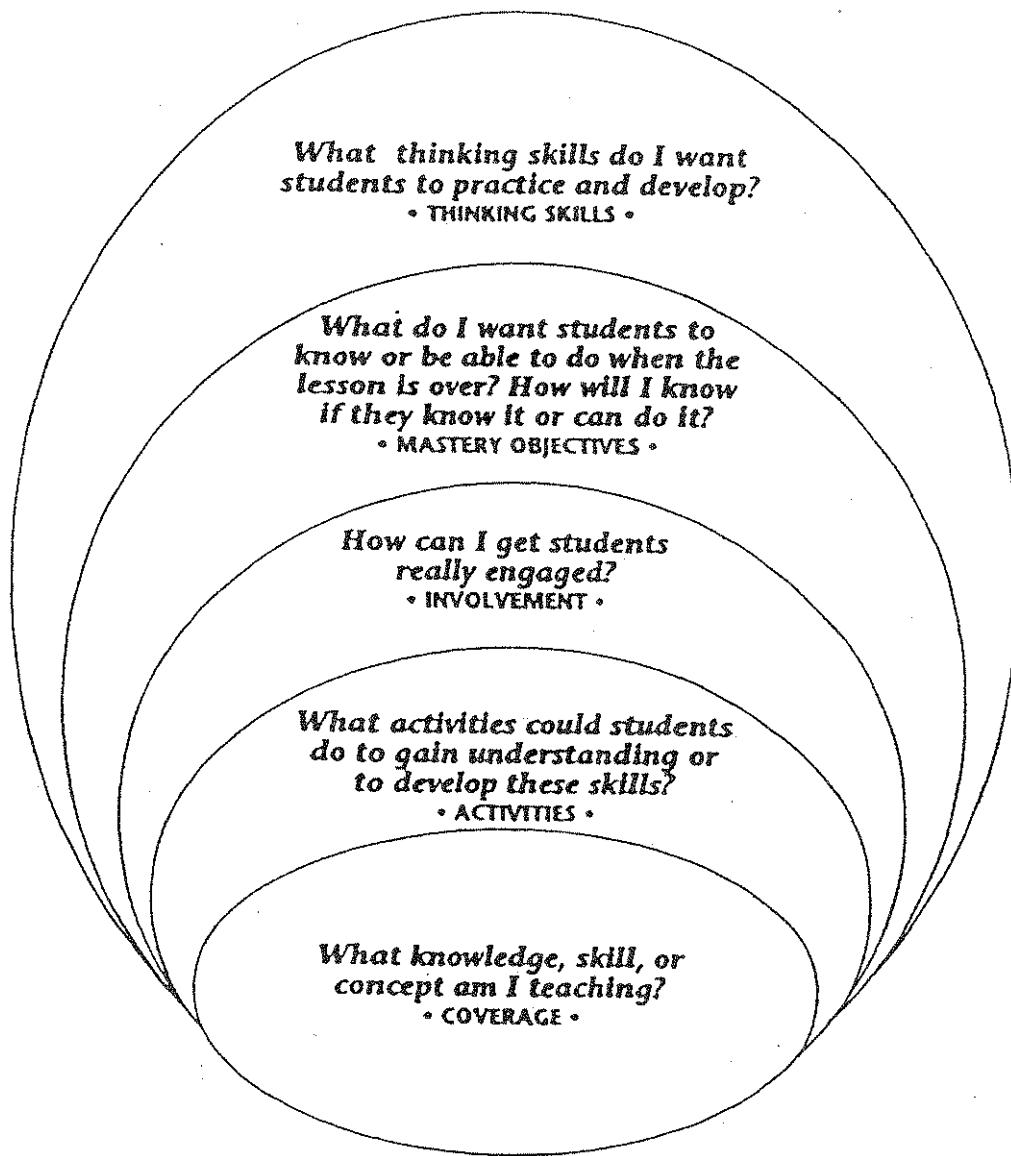


Figure 14.3: Thinking About Objectives

## Key Questions on Lesson Planning

This graphic organizer maps four kinds of thinking about objectives.

Source: *The Skillful Teacher* by Jonathon Sapien, Robert Gower  
5<sup>th</sup> Edition, 1997, page 406  
ISBN: 1886822069

# INSTRUCTIONAL APPROACHES

|                             |  |
|-----------------------------|--|
| <b>PRESENTATION</b>         | ONE WAY COMMUNICATION. USED TO PRESENT INFORMATION TO A GROUP                                |
| <b>DEMONSTRATION</b>        | MODELS TO STUDENTS HOW TO DO A TASK AS WELL AS WHERE, WHEN, AND WHY.                         |
| <b>DISCUSSION</b>           | ENCOURAGES CLASSROOM RAPPORT AND ACTIVELY INVOLVES STUDENTS IN THE LEARNING                  |
| <b>COOPERATIVE LEARNING</b> | IVOLVES A SMALL GROUPS WORKING TOGETHER TOWARD A COMMON GOAL.                                |
| <b>DISCOVERY</b>            | AN APPROACH THAT ENCOURAGES STUDENTS TO FIND ANSWERS FOR THEMSELVES                          |
| <b>PROBLEM SOLVING</b>      | AN APPROACH IN WHICH STUDENTS USED PREVIOUSLY MASTERED SKILLS TO RESOLVE A CHALLENGE.        |
| <b>SIMULATION</b>           | A SCALED DOWN APPROXIMATION OF A REAL LIFE SITUATION PROVIDES PRACTICE WITHOUT THE RISKS     |
| <b>DRILL AND PRACTICE</b>   | AN APPROACH THAT LEADS STUDENTS THROUGH A SERIES OF EXERCISES TO INCREASE FLUENCY IN A SKILL |
| <b>TUTORIAL</b>             | AN APPROACH IN WHICH CONTENT IS PRESENTED, THE LEARNER RESPONSES, AND FEEDBACK IS GIVEN      |

# Lesson 1

## Lesson Objectives

1. Students will review short vowel words. (P)
2. Students will spell five words correctly. (S)
3. Students will read the story The Hen's Egg. (R)
4. Students will copy a sentence neatly and correctly. (H)

## Materials

Workbook page 1  
Book: The Hen's Egg  
Lesson 1 flash cards  
Short Vowel Chart

## Teaching

1. Use the short vowel chart to review the short vowel sounds. Have students say each clue word and then the sound in isolation. For example: bat, *a*. After saying all five words and sounds, have the students repeat the sounds only (*a, e, i, o, u*). Include this portion of the lesson in the next four lessons. If there are students needing more practice with short vowel sounds, continue this as a daily routine past lesson 5. Use flash cards to drill words randomly or write words on paper or a chalkboard. Assign the work sheet. Students cut out the boxes at the bottom of the sheet (with the words). They fill in the missing vowel and glue the word next to the matching picture.

2. Have the students write the following words on a piece of paper as spelling dictation:

**pack, rug, fox, ship, yell**

This is the spelling list for the first spelling test given in lesson 5. After giving the spelling dictation, write the words on a chalkboard and have children make any corrections needed to their spelling dictation. Students will use this list to prepare for the test. The teacher should check the student's list since it will be used for learning the words.

3. The Hen's Egg focuses on reviewing short vowel words, although it also contains long vowel words, and words that don't fit either the long vowel or short vowel patterns that were taught in the Step One program. Before starting to read the story, use flash cards to introduce the following words to the children:

or, said, to, was, you

Many of the rules for these words will be taught in later lessons, for now help children learn the words as additional reading vocabulary. Here are some suggestions to help children remember the words:

The word *or*: rhymes with 4.

The word *said*: sounds like it should be spelled *sed*, and rhymes with *red*.

The word *to*: Sounds like the word two. We use *to* when writing or reading about something going to someplace: I want to go to the store.

The word *was*: sounds like it should be spelled *wuz*.

The word *you*: sounds like the letter u

Next, have the children read the word list on the back of the book. Finally, read the book.

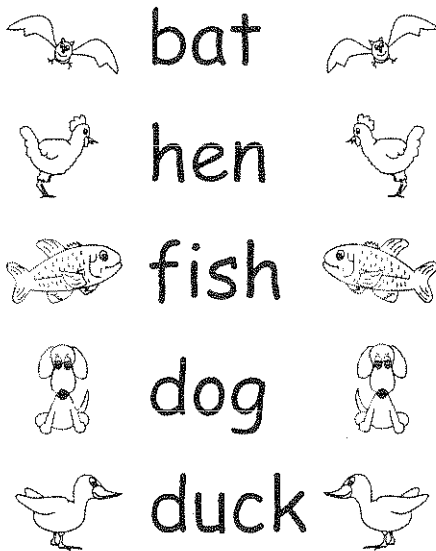
# Lesson 1

4. Use the handwriting sheet or have the children write the following:

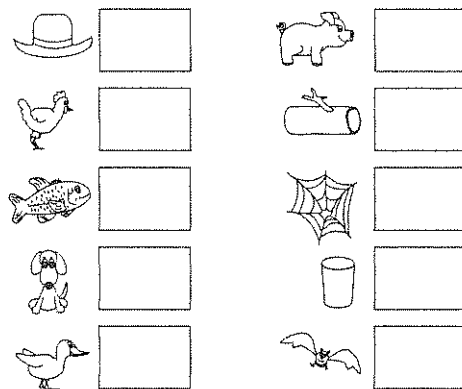
Review A and a, write a line of each.

Write the sentence: The cat sat on a red wig.

## Short Vowel Chart T1



## Worksheet T1



|     |      |     |      |     |
|-----|------|-----|------|-----|
| h_t | c_p  | w_b | d_ck | d_g |
| p_g | f_sh | h_n | l_g  | b_t |

## The Hen's Egg word list T3

|       |      |       |
|-------|------|-------|
| a     | hid  | peep  |
| an    | hill | ran   |
| back  | him  | red   |
| bad   | l    | rock  |
| be    | in   | run   |
| bit   | it   | said  |
| bone  | Jeb  | sat   |
| box   | last | she   |
| came  | left | shed  |
| can   | made | still |
| dish  | may  | the   |
| dog   | nest | to    |
| egg   | nip  | up    |
| gave  | no   | was   |
| get   | not  | will  |
| got   | on   | won   |
| hen   | or   | yell  |
| hen's | peck | you   |

## Handwriting Guide T4

Traditional or Modern

\A\a\ \A\a\

# Lesson 2

## Lesson Objectives

1. Students will review short vowel sounds. (P)
2. Students will read the story The Hen's Egg. (R)
3. Students will review their spelling list. (S)
4. Students will write a sentence neatly and correctly. (H)

## Materials

Short Vowel Chart  
Book: The Hen's Egg  
Workbook page 2

*Handwriting Guide*  
**Traditional or Modern**  
**\B\\b\ \B\b\**

## Teaching

1. Review using the chart activity as outlined in lesson one. Next, have students look at the back of the reading book The Hen's Egg. Have them find words for each short vowel sound.

Next, assign the workbook page. Read the sentences to the students and have them fill in the missing vowels. Underneath each sentence is a list of the vowels used. They are in alphabetical order, not necessarily the order they are used.

**Dad bit the red hot dog and the bun.**  
**Did Josh step on the tack in the mud?**  
**The bug on the log fell in the grass.**  
**The fish had fun in the big shell.**

(You may have the students try the last sentence without you reading it)

**The pup got the stick and ran to Deb.**

2. Review the following word list before reading the story: or, said, to, was, you. Have students find the words on the back of the book.

Have them read the word that comes before and after it in the list (except the word *you*). After reading the book ask the following questions from pages 1 to 4:

**What was the name of the dog? (Jeb)**  
**What did the dog want from the hen? (an egg)**  
**Why did the dog leave the shed the first time?**  
(It got pecked by the hen)  
**Where did the hen put the rock? (in the nest)**  
**Where did the hen put the egg? (in a box)**  
**Why do you think the hen didn't give Jeb the egg?**  
**What do you think will happen next? Why?**

**T1**  
D\_\_d b\_\_t the r\_\_d h\_\_t d\_\_g and the b\_\_n.  
a, e, i, o, u  
D\_\_d J\_\_sh st\_\_p on the t\_\_ck in the m\_\_d?  
a, e, i, o, u  
The b\_\_g on the l\_\_g f\_\_ll in the gr\_\_ss.  
a, e, o, u  
The f\_\_sh h\_\_d f\_\_n in the b\_\_g sh\_\_ll.  
a, e, i, i, u  
The p\_\_p g\_\_t the st\_\_ck and r\_\_n to D\_\_b.  
a, e, i, o, u

*The Hen's Egg word list* **T2**

|       |      |       |
|-------|------|-------|
| a     | hid  | peep  |
| an    | hill | ran   |
| back  | him  | red   |
| bad   | I    | rock  |
| be    | in   | run   |
| bit   | it   | said  |
| bone  | Jeb  | sat   |
| box   | last | she   |
| came  | left | shed  |
| can   | made | still |
| dish  | may  | the   |
| dog   | nest | to    |
| egg   | nip  | up    |
| gave  | no   | was   |
| get   | not  | will  |
| got   | on   | won   |
| hen   | or   | yell  |
| hen's | peck | you   |

3. Have the students copy the spelling words on a piece of paper: pack, rug, fox, ship, yell
4. Use the handwriting sheet or have the children write the following:

Review B and b, write a line of each. Write the sentence: The bug fell in the big box.

# Lesson 3

## Lesson Objectives

1. Students will review short vowel sounds. (P)
2. Students will read the story The Hen's Egg. (R)
3. Students will categorize words based on things they can see or things they can do. (L)
4. Students will write a sentence neatly and correctly. (H)

## Materials

Short Vowel Chart  
Book: The Hen's Egg  
Workbook page 3

*Handwriting Guide*  
**Traditional or Modern**

\C\c/ \C\c/

## Teaching

1. Review using the chart activity as outlined in lesson one. Next, have the children look at their spelling word list. Ask which word has the *u* sound (rug). Have them identify the short vowel sound as short u. Repeat for the other four words in random order.
2. Have the students read the story again. Ask the following questions from pages 5 to 10:

**On page 5, what did the hen sit on?** (a rock)

**Why did the hen leave the nest on page 7?** (Because the dog had threatened to nip her.)

**Did the dog get the hen's egg?** (No) **What did he get?** (the rock)

**How did the hen trick the dog?** (It switched the egg and the rock)

**Why did the dog yell?** (He bit the rock)

**What happened to the egg at the end of the story?** (It hatched)

**Do you think the dog will try to get the chick?**

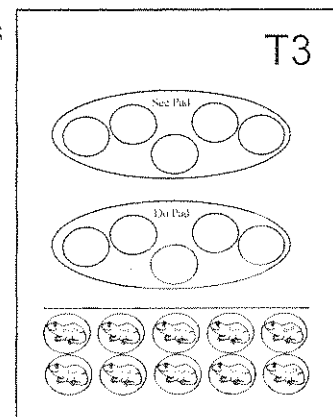
3. Grammar instruction will begin in this lesson, although grammatical terms are not used. Basically, students are categorizing words as nouns or verbs. Have students look at the back of the reading book. Tell students that words have different uses.

Some words are things, people, or places. Some words are things we can do. Have students find a word on the back of the book that is something they can do. Next, have students find words that are things.

Use Workbook page 3. Have students cut out the ovals with the frogs and glue them on the correct pads. On the see pad, glue the frogs that have word on them that are things we can see. On the do pad have students glue the frogs that are things we can do.

See Pad: neck, fox, hill, rug, van

Do Pad: run, mix, grab, toss, yell



4. Use the handwriting sheet or have the children write the following:

Review C and c, write a line of each. Write the sentence: Can Ken cut the cob?

# Lesson 4

## Lesson Objectives

1. Students will review short vowel sounds. (P)
2. Students will read the story The Hen's Egg. (R)
3. Students will alphabetize words. (L)
4. Students will write a story. (CW)
5. Students will write a sentence neatly and correctly. (H)

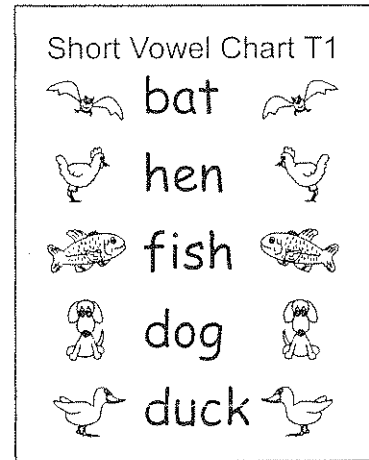
## Materials

Short Vowel Chart

Book: The Hen's Egg

Workbook page 4

Spelling word list: pack, rug, fox, ship, yell



## Teaching

1. Review using the chart activity as outlined in lesson one. Play the following game. Tell the students to listen to the instructions and the words in each list:

I will say some words. Clap once when I say a word that has the short i sound:

**red, rid, rod, big, bag, bug**

I will say some words. Put your hand on your head when I say a word that has the short o sound. **rock, rid, rod, nut, not, bag, bog**

I will say some words. Put your finger on your nose when I say a word that has the short u sound. **sack, buck, let, sock, pup, rub, rob**

I will say some words. Tug on your ear when I say a word that has the short e sound: **met, fin, red, fox, peck, lag**

I will say some words. Meow like a cat when I say a word that has the short a sound: **cat, dog, sad, fan, fun, tag, wet**

2. Have the students read the word list on the back of the book. Next, read the story. After reading the story, have the students find the page numbers for the following sentences:

**The hen hid the egg. (4)**

**"I will get a bone." (9)**

**The nest was in the shed. (1)**

**"Run or I will nip you," said Jeb. (6)**

**The hen gave Jeb a peck. (2)**



# Lesson 4

- The children will begin learning simple alphabetizing by first letter only. Introduce the term alphabetize and alphabetical order.

**Alphabetize** means to put letters in the order they are in the alphabet. If we put words in alphabetical order, we look at the first letter. We put the words in order by putting words that begin with **a** first, **b** second, etc.

Write the following letters on the chalk board: c b d a. Have students rewrite the letters in the order they are in the alphabet. Repeat for the letters: g i h e f.

In the next example some of the letters have been left out: m p j n k. Have students put them in the correct order (j k m n p). Ask what letters have been left out (after the letter j and before the letter p). (l and o)

Next use the following as an example for work book page 4: can an Dan ban. Instead of rewriting the words, have students number them from 1 to 4 like on the workbook page.

- Students will create a story based upon The Hen's Egg. Refer to the creative writing instructions in the reference section for more information if needed.

**In the story, what did the dog want to do?** (take the hen's egg)

**How did the hen trick the dog?** (She put a rock in the nest and hid her egg.)

**Why do you think the dog wanted the egg?** (to eat, hungry, etc.)

**Why do you think the dog didn't eat something else, why do you think he wanted the hen's egg?** (answers vary)

**How do you think the dog felt before it bit the egg?** (answers vary)

**How do you think the dog felt about the hen after biting the egg?** (answers vary)

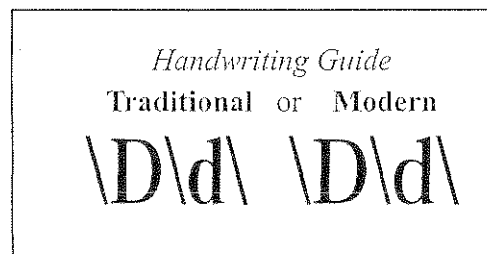
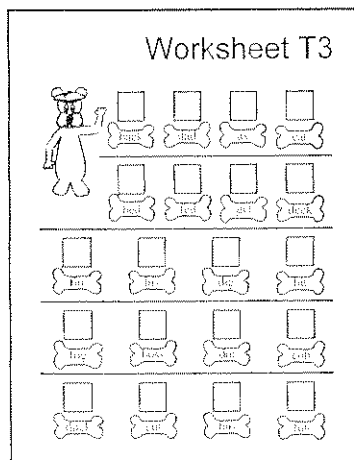
**Today you will write a story. You will retell the story from the dog's viewpoint. You can start with these words or write your own:**

**I was hungry one day. I saw the hen's egg.** \_\_\_\_\_

- Use the handwriting sheet or have the children write the following:

Review D and d, write a line of each.

Write the sentence: Did Deb get the doll on the bus?



# Lesson 5

## Lesson Objectives

1. Students will take a test on short vowel sounds.(P)
2. Students will color the story The Hen's Egg. (R)
3. Students will read stories they have written. (CW)
4. Students will take a spelling test. (S)

## Materials

Workbook page 5






Book: The Hen's Egg

Spelling word list: pack, rug, fox, ship, yell

## Teaching

1. Use workbook page 5 as a phonics test. For lines 1 to 5 say a word and have the students circle it:

Line 1: **bud**  
 Line 2: **peck**  
 Line 3: **miss**  
 Line 4: **log**  
 Line 5: **pan**

|   |       |       |      |      |      |    |
|---|-------|-------|------|------|------|----|
| Circle the word that has the same vowel sound as the picture.                       |       |       |      |      |      | T1 |
| 1   | bud   | bed   | bid  | bed  | bud  |    |
| 2   | pack  | peck  | pick | pack | pick |    |
| 3   | miss  | mess  | mus  | moss | miss |    |
| 4   | log   | leg   | fig  | egg  | log  |    |
| 5   | pan   | pen   | pin  | pon  | pan  |    |
| Circle the word that has the same vowel sound as the picture.                       |       |       |      |      |      |    |
|  | hid   | sai   | step | got  | run  |    |
|  | cash  | ted   | shop | sun  | hit  |    |
|  | stamp | dump  | cog  | egg  | quit |    |
|  | limp  | quack | bug  | boss | met  |    |
|  | rock  | shut  | zip  | damp | well |    |

For the bottom section, have the students circle the word that has the same vowel sound as the picture:

hen - step, fish - hit, cat - stamp, dog - boss, duck - shut

2. Students may color the pictures in the story The Hen's Egg. Ask the students the following questions about the story (answers may vary):

**Do you think this is a true story? Why do you think that?**

**How do you think the hen got the egg in the box?**

**What do you think the dog learned in the story?**

**Do you think the dog will try to get the hen's egg again?**

**Why do you think that?**

**Why wouldn't the chicken give the dog an egg?**

3. Students may continue working on stories from lesson 4. Have students read their stories even if they are not completed.
4. Have students number their paper from 1 to 5. Give the following words as dictation.

Spelling word list: 1. rug, 2. ship, 3. pack, 4. yell, 5. fox

## Learning Plan (Sample)

### Learner and Tutor

#### January to April

*Reading – Learner would like to read stories about people from other countries.*

- We will look for books in the resource centre.
- We will look for books in the library.
- We will try to read one new book each month.

*Writing – Learner would like to write letters to the government.*

- about the cuts to the TTC
- about countries that don't have clean drinking water
- any problems that come up

*Spelling – Learner wants to work on spelling.*

- We will take hard words from the books we read.
- We will make flashcards to help Learner remember the words.
- We will start with putting the letters of the alphabet on cards (using Learner's stickers) and write a word that starts with each letter.
- We will add new words when we learn them.

*Math – Learner wants to learn more math.*

- We will start by adding and subtracting with two numbers.
- We can use straws and Learner's ruler for help.
- We can play some games with math.

*Field trips – Learner would like to go on some outings to help her learning.*

- We will meet at Learner's house to help her learn how to use her answering machine.
- We will go to the library to get the books we need for reading.

# LESSON PLAN

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_ Lesson # \_\_\_\_\_

Tutor Name \_\_\_\_\_ Length of Lesson \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Lesson \_\_\_\_\_

Lesson Goal/Objectives \_\_\_\_\_

Review Homework \_\_\_\_\_

## **Work in Progress**

***This Session***

***Next Session***

Language Experience \_\_\_\_\_

Writing \_\_\_\_\_

Reading \_\_\_\_\_

Workbook \_\_\_\_\_

Other \_\_\_\_\_

## **Trigger Materials as Needed**

## **Comprehension**

## **Questions/Discussion (Before, During, After)**

## **Writing Comments**

**LESSON PLAN**—*continued*

***Direct Instruction (from Reading/Writing)***

***This Session***

***Next Session***

Sight Words

Phonics

Word Patterns

Multi-Syllabic Words

Spelling

***Reinforcement for Direct Instruction***

Workbooks—Subskills

Games, Puzzles, etc.

***Student Evaluation***

***Homework Assignment***

***Model Reading***

Selection—Title, Pages

***Student Comments***

***Tutor Notes (assessment, observation)***

# Student Roster

[illegible]

## Definitions

## Definitions

**active voice** the subject of the verb carries out some action, as he hit the ball

**affix** a bound (non-word) morpheme that changes the meaning or function of a root or stem to which it is attached, as the prefix ad- and the suffix -ing in adjoining

**alliteration** the repetition of the same sound, usually of a consonant, at the beginning of two or more words immediately succeeding each other, or at short intervals, or the repetition of f and g in: fields ever fresh, groves ever green

**annotated bibliography** the inclusion of additional comments in the works listed in the standard bibliography

**antecedent** a word, phrase, or clause to which a following pronoun refers, as Iris is the antecedent of she in Iris tried, but she couldn't find the book

**appositive** a word or phrase that restates or modifies an immediately preceding nominal, as Enrico in My son Enrico is 12 years old. Note: an appositive is often useful as a context clue for determining or refining the meaning of the word(s) to which it refers

**base word** a word to which affixes may be added to create related words, as teach in reteach or teaching

**blend** a combination of sounds represented by letters to pronounce a word; as in sounding out the joining of the sounds represented by two or more letters with minimal change in those sounds, as /gr/ in grow, /spl/ in splash; consonant cluster

**clustering** a content field technique or strategy to help students freely associate ideas in their experience with a keyword proposed by the teacher, thus forming a group of related concepts; a teaching process of "relating a target word to a set of synonyms and other word associations" (May, 1994). Note: clustering can be used to stimulate the recall of related ideas in



reading and writing, especially in pre-writing

**complement** the word (or words) that complete(s) the action of a verb in the predicate of a sentence, as "policeman" in Tom is a policeman; to complete a grammatical construction in this way

**complementary** a state of relationship between words with contradictory meanings, as man-woman, bachelor-husband. Note: complementaries are characterized by a lack of gradation of meaning between them. In contrast, in antonymy, words have opposite meanings, each of which can nevertheless be graded; as big-small, bigger-smaller, biggest-smallest.

**compound sentence** a sentence with two or more coordinate independent clauses but no dependent clause, as George talked and Harry listened.

**consonant doubling** the addition of consonant in the formation of some gerunds and participles

**context clues** the information from the immediate textual setting that helps identify a word used for decoding (sounding out) words being read for the first time, the reader's speaking vocabulary words context is a back-up strategy and is primarily useful to resolve ambiguity (is bread pronounced bred or breed) and to confirm the accuracy of decoding (does it make sense and does it sound right?); and used for words that have become automatically recognized, the context helps resolve which shade of meaning is intended (progress or progress); and used for learning the meaning of new words which can be decoded or pronounced but are not yet in the reader's speaking vocabulary, it is a primary strategy).

**decoding** the ability and willingness to sound out words by generating all the sounds into a recognizable word (technically called phonological recoding); and the ability to get the meaning of a word quickly, effortlessly, and unconsciously after a brief visual scan, as in automaticity with individual words which is the product of initial phonological decoding and then reading that word successfully a number of times, preferably in text, until the neural connections among the letters, sounds, and the word's meaning are fully established

**description** one of the four traditional forms of composition in speech and writing, meant to give a verbal picture of character and event, including the setting in which they occur

**digraphs** two letters that represent one speech sound, as *ch* for /ch/ in *chin* or *ea* for /e/ in *bread*

**discourse** a conversation, the act or result of making a formal written or spoken presentation on a subject, as a learned discourse or literacy; in linguistics, any form of oral or written communication more extensive than a sentence

**etymology** the history of words; the study of the history of words

**exposition** one of the four traditional forms of composition in speech and writing, intended to set forth or explain. Note: good exposition is clear in conception, well organized, and understandable. It may include limited amounts of argumentation, description, and narration to achieve this purpose.

**expressive writing** a highly personal writing, as in diaries, personal letters, autobiographies, etc.

**fluency** the clear, easy, written or spoken expression of ideas; freedom from word-identification problems that might hinder comprehension in silent reading or the expression of ideas in oral reading; automaticity; the ability to execute motor movements smoothly, easily, and readily

**four modes** the traditional forms of composition in speech and writing: exposition, narration, persuasion, and description. (each defined in this document)

**high frequency words** a word that appears many more times than most other words in spoken or written language. Note: basic word lists generally provide words ranked in order of their frequency of occurrence as calculated from a sample of written or spoken text suitable for the level of intended use.

**initial consonants** the joining of two or more consonant sounds, (initial blends) represented by letters, that begin a word without losing the identity of the sounds, as /bl/ in black, /skr/ in scramble; the joining of the first consonant and vowel sounds in a word, as /b/ and /a/ in baby. Note: this process is regarded by some to be a crucial step in learning phonics

**irregularity** an exception to a linguistic pattern or rule, as good, better, best are exceptions to the usual -er, -est, pattern of comparatives and superlatives in English

**literary analysis** the study of a literary work by a critic, student, or scholar; a careful, detailed reading and report thereof.

**literary criticism** the analysis and judgment of works of literature. The body of principles by which the work of writers is judged. Note: The principles used in judging a literary work vary from the highly personal and subjective to the relatively objective; they may involve specific consideration of moral values, historical accuracy, literary form and type, etc., and may vary from one literary period to another

**main idea** the gist of a passage; central thought; the chief topic of a passage expressed or implied in a word or phrase; the topic sentence of a paragraph; a statement in sentence form which gives the stated or implied major topic of a passage and the specific way in which the passage is limited in content or reference

**media sources** the means of communication, especially of mass communication, as books, newspapers, magazines, radio, television, motion pictures, recordings, etc.

**narration** one of the four traditional forms of composition in speech and writing, that tells a story or gives an account of something, dealing with sequences of events and experiences, though not necessarily in strict order  
**non-verbal** a non-language, as noise; with little or no use of language.

**nonsense syllable** a pronounceable combination of graphic characters, usually trigrams, that do not make a word, as kak, vor, mek pronounced in English as spellings. Note: nonsense syllables are sometimes used in reading to test

phonics knowledge, and in spelling to test for desired syllabic patterns while avoiding known words

**onomatopoeia** the terms used to describe words whose pronunciations suggest their meaning (e.g., meow, buzz)

**oral histories** the stories, histories, etc., kept alive by the spoken word rather than writing. Note: while an oral tradition is characteristic of an oral culture, it may coexist in a writing culture

**parallelism** the phrasing of language so as to balance ideas of equal importance. Note: parallelism may apply to phrases, sentences, paragraphs, or longer passages or whole selections

**passive voice** the subject of the verb is the receiver of some action or state indicated by the verb, as He was hit by the ball

**persuasion** one of the four traditional forms of composition in speech and writing, meant to move the reader by argument or entreaty to a belief or position

**phoneme** a minimal sound unit of speech that, when contrasted with another phoneme, affects the naming of words in a language, as /b/ in book contrasts with /t/ in took, /k/ in cook, /h/ in hook. Note: The phoneme is an abstract concept manifested in actual speech as a phonetic variant, as the allophones of the phoneme /t/ in top, stop, pot.

**phonics** a system of teaching reading and spelling that stresses basic symbol-sound relationships and their application in decoding words, used especially in beginning instruction

**phonemic awareness** the awareness of the sounds (phonemes) that make up spoken words. Such awareness does not appear when young children learn to talk; the ability is not necessary for speaking and understanding spoken language; however, phonemic awareness is important for learning to read; in alphabetic languages, letters (and letter clusters) represent phonemes, and in order to learn the correspondences between letters and sounds, one must have some understanding of the notion that words are made up of phonemes

**phonogram** a graphic character or symbol that can represent a phonetic sound, phoneme or word; in word recognition, a graphic sequence comprised of a vowel grapheme and an ending consonant grapheme, as -ed in red, bed, fed

**pre-writing** the initial creative stage of writing, prior to drafting, in which the writer formulates ideas, gathers information, and considers ways to organize them; planning

**principle parts of verbs** the principle parts: the set of inflected forms of a grammatical class, as sing, sang, sung

**prior knowledge** the knowledge that stems from previous experience. Note: prior knowledge is a key component of schema theories of reading comprehension in spite of the redundancy inherent in the term

**r-controlled sound** the modified sound of vowel immediately preceding /r/ in the same syllable, as in care, never, sir, or, curse, etc.

**root word** the meaningful base form of a complex word, after all affixes are removed. Note: a root may be independent, or free, as read in unreadable, or may be dependent, or bound, as -liter- (from the Greek for letter) in illiterate

**sensory details** the details perceived by sight, hearing, smell, or any mode by which one perceives stimuli outside or within the body

**sentences:**

**declarative** a sentence that makes a statement

**exclamatory** a sentence that makes a vehement statement or conveys strong or sudden emotion

**interrogative** a sentence that asks a question or makes an inquiry

**sequencing** the structuring of successive speech acts according to their socio-cultural functions, as in the temporal sequence "Hello," "You look fine," "Goodbye."

**sight word** a word that is immediately recognized as a whole and does not require word analysis for identification

**syllabication** the division of words into syllables [the minimal units of sequential speech sounds comprised of a vowel sound or a vowel-consonant combination, as /a/, /ba/, /ab/, /bab/, etc.]

**theme** a topic of discussion, writing, etc.; a major idea or proposition broad enough to cover the entire scope of a literary or other work of art. Note: a theme may be stated or implicit, but clues to it may be found in the ideas that are given special prominence or tend to recur in a work

**thesis** the basic argument advanced by a speaker or writer who then attempts to prove it; the subject or major argument of a speech or composition

**topic** the general category or class of ideas, often stated in a word or phrase, to which the ideas of a passage as a whole belong

**topic sentence** a sentence intended to express the main idea in a paragraph or passage

**transitive verb** a verb that takes a direct object, as read in Francesca read the book

**unknown words** the words that are unfamiliar to a reader in both print and meaning

**voice** a syntactic pattern that indicates the verb-subject relationship; the principal voices in English and many other languages are active and passive

**word recognition** the process of determining the pronunciation and some degree of meaning of a word in written or printed form; the quick and easy identification of the form, pronunciation, and appropriate meaning of a word previously met in print or writing

## Phonics Definitions

**Initial Consonants:** letters of the alphabet that are not vowels

b, c, d, f, g, h, j, k, l, m, n, p, q, r, s, t, v, w, x, y, z

**Initial Consonants Blends:** br, cr, dr, fr, gr, pr, tr, bl, cl, fl, gl, sl, sc, sk, sm, sn, sp, st, sw, tw, qu, pl

**Note:** Seven (7) of the consonant letters blend with 'r'.

Six (6) of the consonant letters blend with 'l'.

**Two Letter Digraphs** (a digraph is two letters making one sound)

|    |       |    |       |    |            |
|----|-------|----|-------|----|------------|
| ch | chair | th | this  | wh | where      |
| sh | shoe  | th | think | ph | photograph |

**Digraphs are found in these positions:**

|           |         |
|-----------|---------|
| Beginning | chair   |
| Middle    | patches |
| Ending    | birch   |

**Two Letter Blends**

kn (n) knife  
wr ® write

**Three Letter Blends**

|     |         |     |        |     |          |
|-----|---------|-----|--------|-----|----------|
| chr | chrome  | shr | shrink | squ | squirrel |
| sch | school  | spl | splash | str | street   |
| scr | scratch | spr | spring | thr | three    |

**Vowel rules:**

1. Initial both short and long
2. Single vowel at end of a word usually short
3. Two letter vowels having one sound; e.g. read, meadow
4. Two letter vowels having a continuous sound: e.g., noise, boy, ou as in out
5. R-controlled vowel sound; e.g., crack-er

## Phonic Definitions (continued)

### Short Vowels

|   |       |   |       |
|---|-------|---|-------|
| a | apple | o | on    |
| e | bed   | u | under |
| i | it    |   |       |

### Long Vowels

|   |       |   |     |
|---|-------|---|-----|
| a | apron | o | no  |
| e | we    | u | use |
| i | kite  |   |     |

### Vowel Combinations

ai, ay, ea, y, ee, ie, y, oa, oe, ow, au, aw, ou, ow, oo, ue, ew, oi, oy, er, ir, ur, ar, or, oo, ea

A **diphthong** is two vowel sounds pronounced together so quickly they make one syllable, (as the oi in oink).

A **syllable** is a part of a word, or whole word, that contains only one vowel sound, and is made with one voice impulse.

### Open Syllables/ Closed Syllables

#### Open Syllable: 1 vowel

The vowel is open at the end.

The vowel sound is long.

Examples: ri-val, re-fine, va-cate, the-sis, spo-ken, ba-con, se-quence

#### Closed Syllable: 1 vowel

The vowel is closed in at the end by a consonant.

The vowel is short.

Examples: sol-id, clos-et, mod-est, ven-om, plan-et, com-ic, val-id



# Literacy and Developmental Disabilities



1997

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## HARNESSING THE POWER OF COMPUTERS TO BETTER THE LIVES OF PEOPLE WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

Shelley Trigg

Can computers improve the lives of people with developmental disabilities? Until recently most people with developmental disabilities have used computers almost entirely for learning academic and basic life skills. But computers can also help develop social and interpersonal skills.

This *Rehabilitation Review* looks at how computers have been used by people with developmental disabilities in the past. It also examines new ideas about information technologies (i.e., personal computers, software packages, and the Internet) and how computers might help connect people with developmental disabilities to others around them.

### Traditional uses of computers

Most people with developmental disabilities use computers for drill-and-practice activities such as computer-assisted instruction (CAI). CAI allows students to practice skills such as telling time, money handling, word recognition and number-related tasks. The idea is that by practicing these basic skills over and over, students with developmental disabilities will gain enough experience--without taking up as much of the teacher's time--to grasp these basic concepts (Robinson & Robinson, 1965). Unfortunately, CAI hasn't resulted in the hoped-for academic gains for these students. Part of the problem is that educators had unrealistic expectations about what computers could help students achieve on their own. But CAI software has problems of its own: most programs are not very

individualized and are useful for teaching certain skills to only a very narrow group of people with developmental disabilities (Conners, Caruso, & Detterman, 1986). These problems have led researchers to suggest that CAI be used sparingly and only to supplement rather than replace traditional teaching practices (Iacono & Miller, 1989). Nevertheless, most special education teachers in Alberta continue to use computers primarily to deliver CAI to their students (Peterson & McDonald, 1991). This may be the result of accessibility: the software is there and teachers have nothing else to use. It may also be the result of thinking about computer applications in old ways.

### **Newer ideas about computers**

Newer ideas about information technologies focus on how computers can develop and foster social interactions. These interactions are important because learning is a social activity. Although students learn individually, social interactions with teachers and other students are critical to the learning process (Okolo, Bahr, & Reith, 1993). Social interactions may also increase self-confidence and interpersonal skills in people with developmental disabilities (Anderson, 1995; Ryba & Selby, 1993). Although these skills are not measurable in academic terms, they often represent great advancements for those involved.

**Fostering collaborative work.** The following stories illustrate how computers can foster interactions among people with developmental disabilities. As part of an introduction to a life skills program at a community college, eight young people used computers three hours a week for 15 weeks with the help of a tutor. They did such things as learn simple computer commands, improve their typing or word processing skills, play games and produce materials from a graphics package.

Initially the students worked by themselves and relied heavily on their tutors for help. At the end of the 15 weeks, they worked much more collaboratively and shared what they had learned with other members of the group. Although the

students varied considerably in what and how much they learned, all of them developed specific academic and social skills (Ryba & Selby, 1993). But their work with computers also allowed them to recognize their own achievements. "For many of the students it was the first time they had ever been in a position to demonstrate some expertise in a technological area or to teach their parents or caregivers about anything" (1993, p. 15).

**Developing communication skills.** Another compelling story involves Belinda, a 10-year-old girl with moderate intellectual disabilities. To help her overcome her poor communication and social skills and her fear of writing, her teacher introduced her to a desktop publishing package that allowed her to communicate but didn't emphasize writing. As she mastered the program, more and more text elements were introduced and Belinda began to use the text to communicate her ideas and experiences. Equally important, Belinda began to interact with her peers. Because the other children recognized Belinda as an expert, they sought her advice and asked for her help with the software (Anderson, 1995). Anderson suggests that Belinda was successful in using the desktop publishing program because she was actively involved with the software and able to control the equipment.

Information technologies serve to help people communicate with others. These stories highlight the importance of information technologies as something more than tools to increase intellectual capacity; they point to unanticipated outcomes of increased social interaction.

Information technologies can act as sites for increasing social interactions by encouraging people to share their expertise about specific computer programs with others, by allowing two or more people to work at one computer terminal and by facilitating interaction "through" the computer, as in a networked environment. Networked environments encourage interaction by allowing people to communicate via e-mail or on-line chat groups. When groups or pairs of students

work together around a computer, social interaction is increased (Podmore, 1991; Spiegel-McGill, Zippiroli, & Mistrett, 1989). Unfortunately little research has looked at the interactions between groups of students with developmental disabilities. The whole area of Internet access and people with developmental disabilities connecting via networked environments remains to be studied. Despite the fact that the Northamptonshire People First organization in the United Kingdom has its own Web site ([www.peoplefirst.org.uk](http://www.peoplefirst.org.uk)) developed by and for people with developmental disabilities, there seems to be an assumption that people with disabilities are unable to use these technologies in all but the most primitive ways.

Studies with non-disabled students show that networked activities work best when they use a group structure rather than a one-to-one structure and when the task is well-defined, has a timeline and an end-product (Riel & Levin, 1990). For example, a project that created school newspapers containing news and information collected by peer reporters from distant classrooms was more effective in motivating students to write than a project that encouraged pairs of students to exchange friendly messages via a computer network. Activities are also more successful when a network coordinator facilitates group planning. In the project where students worked on the school newspaper, the coordinator organized the exchange of student stories and sent out the master pages to the various schools so that a finished version of the paper could be produced.

### **Using computers effectively**

Although there are no specific rules about how to use computers most effectively, the following guidelines may help people to design more effective computer tasks that encourage social interaction.

- Organize tasks that encourage two or three people to work at one computer.

- Ensure that tasks or computer software allow individuals to take an active part in problem solving and controlling the equipment.
- Individualize one-person-on-one-computer tasks. Make sure the person is motivated by what he or she is doing.
- When someone is working alone at a computer, look for ways to encourage him or her to interact and communicate with others.

By acknowledging that computers can be sites for social interaction, educators and others who support people with developmental disabilities can use computers to improve people's lives.

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# **Journal Articles**





# *ABE NetNews*

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Welcome to the fourth edition of *ABE NetNews* written by LDA Learning Center and funded through an ABE Supplemental Grant. In each issue we feature a different topic related to Adult Basic Education and the challenges faced teaching adult learners. This issue's feature topic is *Interventions for Adult Learners with Learning Disabilities and Depression*. In addition, we will discuss techniques to enhance reading comprehension. Our goal in providing this information is to give you useful, proven strategies for working with adults who have learning disabilities or learning difficulties.

## **Interventions for Adults Learners with Learning Disabilities and Depression**

Instructors are typically trained to work with learners that have average skills. Many are trained to work with slow learners, gifted learners, and learners who lack discipline. However, most instructors are not well prepared to work with learners who have depression and/or mental health issues. Research suggests that teaching "self-esteem" in the classroom is a positive way to support these individuals. The following strategies are useful in helping learners improve their self-esteem and become more confident both academically and socially:

- **Set a Warm, Supportive Tone in the Classroom**

Instructors cannot *give* learners self-esteem. They can, however, create a climate that nurtures it. This environment provides an accepting atmosphere in which learners feel valued, supported, and free to take risks. It is important that instructors show respect for all learners. Learners need to know that mistakes are a normal and expected part of the learning process. Encourage learners to compliment their peers and to laugh at themselves. Never allow them to make fun of or put others down.

- **Consider the Impact of Your Actions and Comments on Your Learners**

An instructor's potential impact on a learner is immeasurable. Even the smallest actions and comments have the ability to lift up a learner or send him/her into a deeper downward spiral. Make a conscience effort to be aware of the impact you have on your learners' self-esteem in the classroom. It is also important that instructors avoid using language that the learner may think or feel is belittling or criticizing, especially in front of peers.

- **Encourage Involvement**

Learners with low self-esteem are often withdrawn or isolated from others. Find ways to integrate the learner into activities either in or out of school, such as parenting support groups. Orchestrate the activities so that learners are likely to meet with success and become involved with positive individuals.

- **Help the Learner Cope With Failure**

The role of the instructor is not simply to show the learner how to minimize difficulty, but also how to constructively cope with it. Teach them that failure is all part of learning and that most successes do not come without some setbacks.

- **Encourage Other Instructors to Bolster the Learner's Confidence**

Talk with other instructors in your program. Ask them to find ways to make the learner feel important. Often being recognized by other instructors is enough to make a learner feel welcomed and valued.

Individuals with depression need a safe and supportive environment. An instructor may feel helpless dealing with depression in the classroom. It is important that the instructor educates him or herself in this area and become familiar with the symptoms. Whether you are dealing with a child, adolescent, or adult, depression can be a very serious disease. To deal specifically with the illness of depression, the following suggestions can be helpful in the classroom:

- **Don't ignore a learner with depression.** Ignoring tends to show the learner that you don't care and provides the learner with another reason to give up.
- **Try to draw out the learner in class discussions.** Do whatever it takes to stimulate their minds so that they don't withdraw and ignore you.
- **Let them know that you care.** Help them to catch up on late work. Set up extra tutoring with a positive role model.
- **Never give up on the learner regardless of how long they have resisted putting forth effort in your class.** Learners can tell when an instructor no longer believes in them and expects them to fail. It typically makes the situation worse.
- **Don't make the learner feel that they have a time limit in which to get over the depression.** Everyone deals with depression in a different time frame.
- **Don't lie to the learner.** Don't make promises about confidentiality that you cannot keep. Know what your school's policies and the law require you to do.
- **Be sincere.** Learners can detect insincerity on your part. If detected, it will cause them further pain. If you feel you are unable to help them, find someone who can.

Barb Geisel, LDA Learning Center

If you suspect that you are working with an adult with undiagnosed depression, first of all, take it seriously. Talk to them about their feelings and how they are coping with their challenges. Secondly, offer the number and web address of United Way's **FIRST CALL FOR HELP** (651) 291-0211  
<http://www.uwmnsp.org/npls/>.

**Review:** *Briefly review each major section as you complete it. Review again later on the same day to keep from forgetting the material. Your understanding of it will be increased each time you review. Go back over the material several times, if possible. Typically up to 90% of what is read is forgotten if not reviewed within 24 hours. Encourage learners to review immediately after learning and then repeatedly on a daily and weekly basis. If highlighting is done appropriately, a review of the highlighted material (and margin notes) should be sufficient.*

## Asking Comprehension Questions

It is helpful when instructors are aware of the wide range of comprehension questions that can be asked to a learner. The following list is a sample of the many types of comprehension questions that can be asked during a reading session.

- **Locating information or facts**
  - *Where in the passage does it talk about \_\_\_\_?*
  - *Find the capital of Alabama.*
- **Stating the main idea**
  - *In one sentence, summarize what you just read.*
  - *Which of the following best tells the main idea of this passage? (Offer 2-3 choices.)*
- **Drawing conclusions or making inferences from the material**
  - *How do you think the main character feels after hearing the news?*
  - *What do you think is the lesson here?*
- **Determining the sequence**
  - *List the order of events. In this story, what happened first, next, and last?*
  - *Draw 3-4 pictures that represent the story line and arrange them in order.*
- **Personalizing the information**
  - *How would you feel in this situation?*
  - *What would you do and why?*

Recommended materials: Barnell Loft *Specific Skills Series*. Barnell Loft, LTD, Baldwin, New York  
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# ***Rehabilitation Review* Volume 11, No. 10, October 2000**

## **Keys to Success: Literacy for Persons with Developmental Disabilities**

**Richard Lockert and Jeanette Coombe**

*"I want to improve my reading and writing and I want to learn to work on the computer and do some math. I hope that by learning new things that I can have a more independent life. I would like to be able to stay at my own apartment and take care of my banking. I feel that if I upgrade my skills that I can one day be making my own decisions." (Sandra Busch, Literacy Learner and Self-Advocate, Beausejour, MB).*

Building literacy skills can be a meaningful experience for any adult, but doing so can be even more significant for adults with developmental disabilities. With improved reading ability comes higher expectations, improved self-esteem and more opportunities including employment possibilities. In many cases, community living becomes easier and more successful, and literacy allows adults with developmental disabilities to become active citizens and more effective self-advocates.

Learners with developmental disabilities may face more challenges than the typical adult learner. Insufficient instruction in the past, lack of retention, slow learning pace, short attention span, generally poorer language skills, low confidence and even transportation to the learning site are all potential barriers. Volunteer literacy tutors and learners' own networks play important roles in helping individuals overcome these barriers. This *Rehabilitation Review* will look briefly at each of four keys to literacy education success which have been identified as significant for people with developmental disabilities: tutor qualities, learner-centred approaches, written materials and support and outreach. These keys come from the *SARC Support Inclusion! Literacy Project*, conducted by the Saskatchewan Association of Rehabilitation Centres (SARC), the literature and our broader experience.

## Tutor Qualities

Rehabilitation workers or tutors working with people who have developmental disabilities need certain characteristics and aptitudes to ensure successful learning relationships. Obviously, they must embrace the belief that the adult learner *can* learn, and they must feel competent and confident in their ability to instruct. The Roeher Institute (1994) cites respect for the learners, good communication skills, perseverance, enthusiasm, interpersonal sensitivity and concern for the whole person as vital qualities for an instructor. Other qualities include creativity, awareness of needs, basic training and supports, a sense of humour and the desire to celebrate success.

Learner-tutor interactions should always be egalitarian rather than hierarchical in essence, both participants are learning and benefitting from the relationship. Student and instructor should always treat each other in a manner they would find acceptable for themselves. And it is also important that the tutor does not impose herself or himself on the student by, for example, "fixing" writing, or suggesting topics.

## Learner-centred Approaches

As much as possible, adult literacy learners with developmental disabilities should generate their own learning goals, based on their own interests and needs. Being in control of their own learning builds self-esteem and helps retain interest.

In some cases, the tutor may need to help the learner set goals for learning. We've learned that the tutor may also need to work with the learner to set realistic small steps which lead toward a larger goal. And, although a balance will need to be struck between immediate literacy needs (such as reading medicine labels) and longer term goals (such as reading a mystery novel), it's important to remember that reading has recreational as well as functional uses.

Educators of people with developmental disabilities emphasize that

- most learners have an attention span of 15-30 minutes for one activity,
- progress can be very slow— measured in months rather than weeks— and dependent upon the frequency and consistency of instruction,
- students are concrete learners, so stories linked to their own experiences will be easier to understand,
- tutors need to be creative and flexible with instructional methods, adapting the learning needs to the interests of the student,
- tutors should use as many different activities as possible for each concept being taught, and, above all
- progress will be faster when both student and tutor are having fun!

### Written Materials

Use "high interest, low vocabulary" reading materials that are meaningful to the interests, life experience, and self-identified "needs" of the reader. According to van Kraayenoord (1992), appropriate written materials should

- be age appropriate and not pedantic,
- provide the opportunity for learning,
- be meaningful for the reader,
- have simple sentence structure, avoiding complex syntax or abstractions,
- follow a logical progression and avoid time displacement (future or past),
- use natural, everyday language, and
- be presented in a clear, uncluttered format, with illustrations linked to the text.

We found very few people producing written materials intended specifically for adults with developmental disabilities. The Norah Fry Institute in England produces information sheets (called *Plain Facts*) on a variety of topics (see <http://www.bris.ac.uk/Depts/NorahFry/PlainFacts>). The Roeher Institute in Toronto is another source for plain language products. And the VTRI also creates plain language materials.

However, the shortage of appropriate materials means that tutors and rehabilitation workers need to be creative. Many tutors recommend using

English as a Second Language (ESL) materials, as they are intended for adult learners, use clear language, and include many pictures and illustrations. Others use the Language Experience Approach, in which the students dictate their ideas to the tutors and then learn to read these created texts, first with assistance and then alone. Repetition and the predictable text are helpful to the learner.

### Support and outreach

For both young and adult readers alike, new literacy skills must be practised and reinforced in different contexts daily. So, it is essential that *all* people involved with the individual are aware of what the student is learning, and how they can help in the transfer of skills to other areas of that person's life. Communication and co-operation between support networks and learners in the home, teaching and work environments can maximize "learning in context" opportunities. In fact, recent work by Beck and Hatt (1998) indicates that such support networks can be crucial in helping learners in "early literacy stages" advance to the point where they are prepared for entry into more mainstream literacy programming.

Koppenhaver and Erickson (1994) emphasize how important it is that learners with developmental disabilities have exposure to written materials, regardless of their current literacy levels, in their home or social environments. Keep pencils and paper at hand, and use the local library so learners can choose the books, videos or tapes *they* are interested in. Learners benefit from watching others use print materials, listening to others read and having opportunities to discuss books, re-tell the stories or ask and answer questions. Doing homework regularly and having someone to provide help when necessary can also be important in supplementing literacy instruction.

There are endless opportunities to reinforce literacy skills through day-to-day activities. Learners understand and retain more when words in their new vocabulary are directly related to their real-world activities. Some ideas include:

- reading recipes while cooking,
- marking important events on a calendar,
- reading traffic signs,

- making a shopping list before going to the store, and
- choosing what to watch on TV with the help of the printed television listings.

### Conclusion

The reality is that literacy programs often don't have adequate knowledge of the particular learning needs of people with developmental disabilities, while staff who work in the field often think they don't have adequate experience in teaching literacy skills. Therefore, it is crucial that literacy and disability organizations co-operate and consult to serve this unique population and, by doing so, help them become fuller participants in their communities.

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## ADULTS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES: A DEVELOPMENTAL PERSPECTIVE

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According to Meizrow (1990) adult education is reparative education.

As they trace their education throughout their lives, people reveal that they often enter adult education classes to *repair* (my italics), compensate for, or fill in the gaps of the past. They dream about the university because earlier in their lives they did not have the chance to study. They embark upon personal development because they hope to overcome and to recover from wounds of the past...In other words, when adults are accepted as university students, they consider themselves as having returned to a process that was, for different reasons, interrupted (Dominice, 1986, in Meizrow, 1990, p. 206).

If adult learning is reparative, then, how can we, as mentors, go on this reparative journey with adult learners who have learning disabilities? I believe we need knowledge in the areas of:

1. Basic understanding of what constitutes the types of learning disabilities, most prevalent in adult learners and the characteristics of adult learners with these types of learning disabilities.
2. Understanding of the process of adult development and how learning disabilities impact upon that development, both cognitively, affectively and psychologically
3. Understanding of how to informally assess learners for learning problems (and make referrals when appropriate)
4. Understanding of how to orchestrate learning for adults with learning problems
5. Understanding of how to encourage the process of metacognition, in order to invite self-reflection

These understandings will be addressed from both constructivism and perspective transformational theoretical viewpoints. The postsecondary educational arena is non-traditional adult education. The teacher-student relationship is defined as a mentoring relationship. Learning is defined as "the process of making a new or revised interpretation of the meaning of an experience, which guides subsequent understanding, appreciation, and action" (Mezirow, 1991, p.1) Teaching is based on intentional developmental outcomes as defined by Taylor, Marienau, and Fiddler (2000) that describe an evolving, growing learner who can: (a) engage with the world of ideas and learn from experience, (b) examine and challenge assumptions, (c) arrive at commitments through self-reflection, (d) relate to others from a place of mutual enhancement rather than need (quoted in Taylor, 1999, p. 64).

The next question, driven by our examination of what understandings, we as mentors, need to address, and the developmental perspective presented of engaging adults in their movement toward autonomy, or "relating to others through mutual enhancement rather than need" is: Under scrutiny, is the conceptual framework of andragogy, introduced by Knowles, sufficient and/or equipped to support adult learners with learning disabilities? My argument is that the conceptual principles of andragogy already in place, have created the underpinnings whereby we, as mentors, can go on this journey.

Knowles (1980) in his seminal work looked at the organizing concepts of adult education and stated that in this era of knowledge explosion, and technical revolution, adult education must be primarily concerned with providing the resources and support for self-directed inquiry. Whitehead also looked at adult education in terms of life-long learning.

In other words, as the time-span of major cultural change has become shorter than the life-span of the individual, it becomes necessary to redefine education as a process of continuing inquiry. The role of the teacher must shift from that of transmitter of information to facilitator and resource to self-directed inquiry, and to regard education as a lifelong process. For knowledge gained at any point of time will

become  
increasingly obsolete in the course of time (Whitehead  
quoted in Knowles,  
1980, p.266.)

Knowles (1980) presented four assumptions of adult education: (a) It is a normal aspect of the process of maturation for a person to move from dependency toward increasing self-directedness, and teachers become facilitators of learning by encouraging and nurturing this movement. (b) As people grow and develop they accumulate an increasing reservoir of experience that becomes an increasingly rich resource for learning (c) People become ready to learn something when they experience a need to learn it, in order to cope more satisfyingly with real-life tasks or problems. Learning is an internal process that engages their whole being—including intellectual, emotional, and physiological functions. The facilitator has a responsibility to create conditions and provide tools and procedures for helping learners discover their 'need to know.' Therefore, learning problems can be sequenced according to the learner's readiness to learn. (4) Learners see education as a process of developing increased competence to achieve their full potential in life. (pp. 43-44).

Knowles (1980) proposed seven process elements of his andragogy model of learning: (a) climate should be relaxed, trusting, mutually respectful, informal, collaborative, warm and supportive, (b) planning is done mutually by learner and facilitator, (c) diagnosis of needs is done by mutual assessment, (d) setting of objectives are created by mutual negotiation, (e) learning activities include experiential techniques, inquiry projects, independent study, (f) evaluation is accomplished by learner-collected evidence. (p.390)

The great pioneer adult-education theorist, Edward C. Linderman summed up the purpose of adult education:

In short, my conception of adult education is this: a  
cooperative venture in  
nonauthoritarian, informal learning, the chief purpose of  
which is to  
discover the meaning of experience; a quest of the mind  
which digs down  
to the roots of the preconceptions which formulate our  
conduct; a  
technique of learning for adults that makes education

coterminous with  
life and hence elevates living itself to the level of  
adventurous experiment .

(quoted in Knowles, p.57)

After first discussing the proposed understanding of needs, I will briefly present a successful model program for adults with learning disabilities utilized at a traditional postsecondary college, which is based on Knowles assumptions and process elements, along with, dialectic inquiry. Finally, I will "plug in" the proposed learning needs, coupled with the learning theories of andragogy, and the elements of a successful program for adults with learning disabilities to the non-traditional postsecondary setting of adult education, thereby presenting a model for mentors, to go on the reparative journey with adults who have learning disabilities. Gerber and Reiff (1994) estimate that 5-20% of the population is affected by a learning disability. Henderson stated, "the percentage of fulltime college students who have indicated that they have a learning disability is 25%" (quoted in Shaprino and Rich 1999). Shaprino and Rich (1999) stated, learning disabilities are not bound by culture or language. They are in all socio-economic groups and can be found throughout the world. Approximately the same number of males as females has learning disabilities. Learning disabilities tend to run in families. According to the U.S. Department of Education Office of Vocational and Adult Education, known causes of Learning Disabilities are: (a) genetic defects, (b) endocrine gland dysfunction, (c) pre-natal malnutrition, (d) maternal substance abuse, (e) birth trauma, (f) chronic illness (ear infections, etc.), (g) early childhood high fevers, (h) lead poisoning, (i) oxygen deprivation, (j) accidents, (k) toxins, and (l) diet. (Young, 1995, p.5) Newman and Buka have listed as causes of learning impairments: (a) prenatal alcohol exposure, (b) maternal smoking, (c) prenatal exposure to drugs, (d) low birth weight, (e) and child abuse and neglect. (quoted in Young, 1995).

There is no single operational definition of learning disabilities (Jorden, 2000). According to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), a student is said to have learning disability if there is a significant discrepancy between ability and achievement in one or more of the following seven areas: "oral expression, listening, comprehension, written expression, basic reading, reading comprehension, mathematical calculation, and reasoning" (quoted in Shaprino and Rich, 1999, p.16). In

1985, the Rehabilitation Services Administration or Vocational Rehabilitation system presented an operational definition for adults with learning disabilities to determine eligibility and establishing learning disabilities as a neuropsychological condition:

...a disorder in one or more of the central nervous system processes involved in perceiving, understanding, and/or using concepts through verbal (spoken or written) language or nonverbal means. This disorder manifests itself with a deficit in one or more of the following areas:  
attention, reasoning, processing, memory, communication, reading, writing, spelling, calculation, coordination, social competence, and emotional maturity. (quoted in Young, 1995).

It is important to point out that there is no formal diagnosis of learning disabilities. Learning disabilities is a definitional term, not a diagnostic term. In the educational system, the term is utilized to represent an educational diagnosis, as a requirement for special education entitlement. In other words, eligibility policies have resulted in an operational definition for the educational system and for the vocational rehabilitation system.

Gerber and Reiff (1994) have stated, "in order to assign a diagnosis, classification using a recognized diagnostic system must be established" (p. 57). These authors cite the Diagnostical and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-IV) of the American Psychiatric Association and the Association and the International Classification of Diseases (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services) "to be the most logical option for adults with learning disabilities. This grouping contains a range of diagnostic options corresponding to several manifestations of learning disabilities" (Gerber and Reiff (1994, p.57). The grouping of Specific Developmental Disorders includes the academic skills of reading, arithmetic, and expressive writing disorders. Language and Speech Disorders include articulation, expressive language and receptive language disorders.

Wren (2000) cites research done by Johnson and Blalock stating that the most common types of learning difficulties in adults are: written language problems, oral language problems, nonacademic problems, and attention and organization problems.

According to Wren (2000) written language problems are the most common pattern of adults with learning disabilities. Reading problems are referred to as dyslexia, which can involve problems in both reading or receptive language and spelling or writing, which is productive language. Dyslexic adults can encounter problems with oral and silent reading in context, with reading comprehension, and with both spelling and writing. However, "because reading and spelling are such complex activities and require a wide variety of cognitive processes, not all those with dyslexia will exhibit exactly the same profile of processing strengths and weaknesses" (Wren, 2000, p.32).

Another common type of learning disability, is difficulty with oral language, "which can involve difficulty with receptive language (listening), as well as expressive language (speaking)" (Wren, 2000, p.32). Adults with this type of learning disability can exhibit " frequent misperceptions, misunderstandings, incorrect word usage, mispronunciations, faulty, syntax and poor organization"(Wren, 2000, p.32). Language abilities tend to be uneven. Although the learner can have a desire to communicate precisely, communication requires concentration because of difficulties in selecting, retrieving, and organizing relevant information.

Non-academic problems or what is termed, a nonverbal learning disability, entails nonverbal processing problems, which involve tactile and visual-spatial perception and judgment. These nonverbal processing problems impact math skills and social competency. Inherent characteristics may include:

Problems with perception and interpretation of facial expression, gesture, body language, inflection, and tone of voice. This may also include the inability to make central inferences in social situations, poor judgment of mood or attitude, and problems discriminating the response requirements in social situations (Wren, 2000, p.33)

Because of the disorganizing effect of not being able to problem solve, (which involves, perception, judgment and sequencing); accompanied by childhood wounds and unresolved grief, the learner may become

frustrated and lack confidence, which compromises his or her ability to cope. Feelings of anxiety can lead to feelings of helplessness, and finally, to feelings of hopelessness. Because of the feelings of being incompetent, the learner may believe that failure is the nature of his or her true self. Lacking the metacognitive skill of self-reflection, the adult with learning disabilities may not be able to develop a sense of self that is detached from his or her cognitive functions and emotional states (Wren, 2000).

Adult developmentalists (Levinson, 1978; Kegan, 1982) cite life and developmental transitions as bringing about the ability to individuate from culture and society, and to be able to engage and listen to, the "voice" of the self. Post formal thinking, the crowing glory of cognition is supposed to develop in adulthood. What happens if these learners, through feelings of incompetence and hopelessness are not able to produce metacognitive skills, and become self-reflective and critical thinkers?

Herein lies the beauty of being a mentor in non-traditional postsecondary education. Adult education is reparative. The dialectic nature of perspective transformative education and constructivism theory create the context for the adult learner with learning disabilities to think about his or her own socio-emotional educational history, thus starting the reparative efforts toward self-esteem, and the regulation of anxieties that will allow the learner to access deeper cognitive constructs.

Metacognitive skills are encouraged in the mentor-student relationship by the object consistency, and unconditional positive regard of the mentor. Mentors, according to Daloz (1986) are the guides that "embody our hopes, cast light on the way ahead, interpret arcane signs, warn us of lurking dangers, and point out unexpected delights along the way" (p.16).

Utilizing the basic process elements of Knowles such as: mutual planning of learning contracts, diagnosis of learning needs such as learning styles, mutual agreement of alternative assessments, and a climate of trust, warmth, and mutual respect, the mentor and student enter into what Vygotsky has termed, the zone of proximal development. According to Bloom (1995), the ZPD represents the student's growing edge, and it is the space in which, the learner's grasp exceeds his or her reach. Bloom

(1995) states that it is in the ZPD that the "images of future growth begin to take shape in the student's mind" (p.7).

This element of "images of future growth" is the hope that the Curry College Learning Center in Massachusetts seeks to awaken in their adult students with learning disabilities. Utilizing the dialectic method, in the mentor-student relationship of the ZPD, the reparative journey begins with the hope that the journey that they are embarking upon, with their mentor, will be repairing and fill in the developmental gaps of their previous educational history.

Adelizzi (1995), a teacher at the Learning Center discusses the classroom trauma, which commonly occurs throughout the educational history of LD children and the resulting symptomology that can be seen in adults entering postsecondary educational experiences:

Classroom trauma, which commonly occurs throughout the education of a child with LD, and grows with him/her into adulthood, can paralyze the individual into a state of helplessness. When many of our PAL students reach Curry College, they can finally breathe a comfortable sigh of relief, sensing almost right away that this is a safe place to disclose their feelings about their learning differences and their classroom experiences. However, their hypervigilance about future classroom traumas never ceases; their radar is always on alert. They are constantly scanning the environment and the professionals with whom they interact for any sign of threat. (P.91)

Adelizzi (1995) further states that this type of psychological trauma "may leave the student with diminishing self-esteem and in a state of fear, humiliation or learned helplessness to the degree where similar situations will be avoided by the student in the future" (p.91). The original and specific cause could have been a person such as a teacher or peer, although with each repetition, a perpetrator is not necessary to induce fear or humiliation because, any situation which is reminiscent of the original classroom trauma, is sufficient to bring back feelings of fear or humiliation. The possible psychological symptoms triggered such as: anxiety, panic, dissociation, attentional disturbances and depression may impede the process of learning. In elementary education, Caine and Caine have called this perceived threat; downshifting (1994) and they have devised methods to manage downshifting in classroom situations.



The methods that the Program for Advancement of Learning (PAL) have devised are based on the mentor-student relationship. Pennini and Peltz (1995) believe that the "commitment to engendering mentoring relationships is based upon an understanding that students who have had traumatic educational experiences need a teaching/learning relationship that goes beyond the conventional faculty/student relationship to building a supportive environment for self reflection" (57)

Without fear of being threatened, because of the supportive climate and the feeling of having control over their learning by mutually agreed upon alternative learning and assessment methods, the mentor-student relationship "becomes the moving force behind each developmental step in metacognitive awareness" (Adelizzi and Goss (1995).

As we teach a new concept, a new skill, we move our students from the task at hand to a deeper understanding of how that learning actually took place, and to why this process is so uniquely personal. We walk with our students, sometimes beside them, sometimes ahead of them, some times behind he, shepherding them in their journeys of discovering themselves as competent learners. (p.6).

These authors sum up the program at PAL by stating that even though they provide interventions such as: adaptive technology, learning strategies, assist in problem solving, "metacognition, thinking about thinking, is the hallmark of our program and the essence of what we do every day" (21).

What we do is get the students to think about their thinking. We mentor them in becoming aware of their own mental processes and in understanding the cognitive tasks involved in their learning and problem solving. We encourage them to become experts in seeing how their own mental abilities and personality characteristics intersect with particular academic tasks and help them to develop and select from a repertoire of strategies that contribute to their learning effectively. We guide them in evaluating the outcomes and in adjusting their behaviors accordingly. (P.22).

How can we, as mentors, in a non-traditional postsecondary setting establish the requirements to instill hope and produce the practical requirements for educational instruction adults with learning disabilities?

My argument is that, we already have, in place the theoretical knowledge and practice to instill hope and encourage the developmental journey of reparative education. I have discussed our theoretical underpinnings. We are already adherents to constructivist's techniques of dialogue. We are already interested in the techniques to encourage psychological, and cognitive developmental lags in order for our students to reach their full potential. My point is this: with the basic theoretical bases in place, we just need an understanding of the practical matters of how to utilize learning methods useful with adults with learning disabilities. The literature now abounds with these methods of learning styles, and the use of accommodative equipment. Let us open our doors to these adults who are so deserving of post-secondary education. As we survey the landscape of non-traditional postsecondary education we find, that because of the very nature of our ideologies and theoretical bases we are ready to go on the reparative journey with adults who have learning disabilities.

For those students who already know they have a learning disability, the solutions are simple, utilize the seven process elements of anadgray: (a) utilize the mentor-student relationship to establish the climate of trust and the dialectic nature of the zone of proximal development for the questioning techniques that encourage metacognition and self-reflection (b) the diagnosing of learning needs, can include an informal assessment to establish learning styles, which can be self-administered and discussed, establishing leaning strengths. Learning needs could include adaptive technology to augment the learner's ability to take part in gathering information needed to be a life-long learner. Dialectic teaching instruction, that entails on-going learning needs assessment is a perfect "fit" for the adult learning with learning disabilities. Learning activities and the process of assessment is mutually agreed upon. Mentors in non-traditional education already employ authentic assessment.

However, according to Shapiro and Rich (1999) it is typical for many adults to have little or no understanding of their learning disability throughout childhood and adolescent. The field of special education was just beginning to be recognized in the 1960s and special education services were limited until legislation provided the impetus, framework, and funding for care. It is possible that the student's learning disability was not adequately identified, or the student was looked upon as having

poor motivation or not "living up" to his or her potential (remember that leaning disabilities have nothing to do with I.Q.).

By utilizing the seven process elements, the reparative process of adult education can begin. The student, in the mentor-student relationship can express their cognitive/affective educational history, thus being able to reflect upon, and identify learning problems. This process of being able to observe and reflect is the first step in metacognitive problem solving which means, the student is stepping back and separating the true self from feelings of failure. Wengler (1995) a professor at Curry College reports on the phenomenon of her students finally being able to step back from the shame, of not being able to learn "in the typical way."

My students report the joy that they feel when they finally understand why they haven't been able to control their learning effectiveness. It is always reported to be a life changing experience, because these learning disabled students can finally share all the pain and hidden fears that continually plagued them. Just knowing the etiology is a major step toward empowerment, and the awakening spirit immediately senses this. (Wengler, 1995, p.137)

Informal self-assessment of learning strengths, learning styles and learning needs, can provide the beginning stages of diagnostic teaching. Mutually agreed upon authentic assessment, can include the process of self-assessment, thus enhancing self-reflection and metacognitive awareness. Outside referral systems may be offered, depending upon the severity of the learning disability.

An ethnographic study of successful adults with learning disabilities done by Reiff, Gerber and Ginsberg (1996) reveals that "the seed of their success was simply the desire to succeed" (p.11) These authors asked if it was possible to instill desire after so many messages of failure. The answer they received was, "the influence of one positive teacher can overcome many negative messages and school experiences." (p.15) The question of: Under scrutiny, is the conceptual framework of andragogy, introduced by Knowles, sufficient and/or equipped to support adult learners with learning disabilities? Has been addressed. The conceptual principles of andragogy already in place have created the underpinnings whereby we, as mentors, can go on this reparative journey with adults who have learning disabilities.

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# **Dyslexic Learners**

## Websites on Dyslexia for Tutors

<http://www.dyslexia-adults.com/wordswork.html>

<http://www.dyslexia-adults.com/index.htm>

<http://www.dfes.gov.uk/readwriteplus/staffpack/tree/dyslexia/teaching/strategies/index.cfm>

<http://www.dfes.gov.uk/readwriteplus/staffpack/tree/dyslexia/styles/implications/index.cfm>

# Dyslexic learners

## A definition

*'Dyslexia is a complex neurological condition that is constitutional in origin. The symptoms may affect many areas of learning and function, and may be described as a specific difficulty in reading, spelling and written language. One or more of these areas may be affected. Numeracy, notational skills (music), motor function and dyslexic learners organisational skills may also be involved. However, it is particularly related to mastering written language, although oral language may be affected to some degree.'* (British Dyslexia Association, 1997)

Dyslexia is a syndrome because several 'signs' are involved. Dyslexic learners may show evidence of difficulties in some or all the following:

- *Phonological awareness* (the ability to break words into speech sounds and the basis of phonics). Some dyslexic learners will have little awareness of rhyme, syllabication or natural breaks in speech and written language. They may also have difficulty with recognising and processing sounds (for example, vowels, blending and segmentation).
- *Auditory discrimination* (recognising the difference between sounds - for example, 'hearing' the difference between mush/much or p/b/v). This may affect auditory sequential memory.
- *Language-based tasks*, rather than concepts. This can include the language of maths.
- *Visual identification* (recognising letters or numbers). The dyslexic learner may confuse letters or number orders. They may also have difficulty with recognising familiar words in print or remembering how they are spelt.
- *Sequencing* (as in the alphabet or times table). The dyslexic learner may confuse or lose track of the order of letters, words or digits.
- *Organisation* (as in, for instance, planning written work). The dyslexic learner may suffer from directional confusion.
- *Short-term memory* (an inability to remember instructions, or to listen/concentrate for longer periods of time).
- *Motor difficulties* (poor pen grip, clumsiness or poor co-ordination). The dyslexic learner may have problems with forming letters and controlling the pen.
- *Automaticity* (the ability to carry out a learnt task without having to think about it). The dyslexic learner might be able to spell a word when thinking about it but will get it wrong when writing it as part of a longer text.



## **Dyslexic Learners**

As with other adult learners, a learning plan for dyslexic learners should state how their basic skills can be improved. It should also give examples of strategies that would suit their processing strengths and their preferred learning style. It is not enough to write 'improve spelling' or 'improve reading'; all dyslexic learners in basic skills classes know that they have weaknesses in these areas. They need a clear explanation of the strategies that will enable them to improve and the way an individual spelling programme will be delivered (see Klein, 1993; Klein and Millar, 1990; Krupska and Klein, 1995; and Spelling to Learn video. For advice about the order in which to teach spelling patterns, see Adult Literacy Core Curriculum, Entry 1, 2 and 3; Diggle, 1996; Lee 2000). For many, it is advisable to start with patterns in words they are already using in their writing or spoken language, linking these with other words. This aids both memory and motivation.

The learning approach for dyslexic learners needs to be structured and multisensory. The reading and writing processes should be made explicit, with plenty of opportunity for overlearning.

<http://www.dfes.gov.uk/readwriteplus/staffpack/tree/dyslexia/plan/using/index.cfm>

# Dyslexic learners

## Implications for learning

To help the dyslexic adult process linguistic information you must:

- start from their own writing, words and areas of interest
- provide specific examples and practices from which general rules can be constructed and remembered (for example, create a game in which a specific numeracy concept will be practiced)
- underpin the learner's learning by using concrete models and ideas (for example, always show dyslexic learners an example of how their finished product should look before asking them to tackle a project)
- make everything explicit by explaining 'how' and 'why'
- build a framework of language with the learner that enables new knowledge to be fitted into the overall pattern
- Ensure there are plenty of opportunities to overlearn.

Dyslexic learners learn better from experience and practice than from generalizations and rules; they therefore need to:

- personalize learning (for example, 'Oh, not W.H.A.T but *What hat*)
- use individual props and strategies to aid understanding (either visual /auditory/tactile or kinaesthetic). *'I create my own "hooks" to remember things. I remember the months of the year by remembering when people's birthdays are.'*

## **Dyslexic learners**

### **Starting points**

For adult dyslexic learners, the learning plan should be based on evidence gathered during the diagnostic process that:

- identifies the major processing weakness
- tries to highlight processing strengths so that these can form the basis of the learning programme
- clarifies the time available and the learner's specific goals, taking into account other priorities in the person's life.

Each learning plan will vary according to the individual's profile of strengths and weaknesses, their preferred learning style and the time they have to devote to literacy development. If the main aim of literacy tuition is to support another course or primary learning goal, the learning plan should be designed to meet these specific needs 'top down'. It should also be based around the learner's primary learning goal and curriculum area or work. If there is time and motivation to build a sound literacy framework from the bottom up, using a structured multisensory programme, then this may be offered and the implications of both approaches should be discussed with the learner. However, it is important that any programme be planned to meet the learner's own priorities and facilitate progression, and that methods that have previously failed are avoided to prevent reinforcing failure.

### ***For learners who have not been diagnosed***

Try to identify the learner's processing strengths and weaknesses. Read the examples in the next section and identify the type of difficulty each person may have. (See Klein, 1993: pp. 26-31 for information about spelling-error analysis.)

The learning plan should be based on a discussion between you and the learner. Establish a dialogue about their learning. You also need to:

- ask the learner to describe their difficulties with written tasks
- observe the individual's preferred learning style
- analyse the type of spelling errors the learner is making (ensuring that you also observe the learner writing) and discuss reasons for these errors with them (see Klein, 1993; Millar and Klein, 1990)
- observe how the learner approaches the reading process (see Klein, 1993: pp. 16-31)
- observe difficulties the learner has in class and any other difficulties that may affect the learning process.

### ***Note the difficulties***

Dyslexic learners need explicit explanations of the types of errors that they make. Both you and the learner need to understand how the learner is learning for an effective basic skills programme to be constructed.

## Classroom accommodations for students with dyslexia

An accommodation does not mean changing the material, it means changing the way the teacher presents the material the way a student practice material and the way a teacher test for mastery.

- Slow the rate of lecture. Pause between thoughts for extra processing time for the student.
- Stop and write a key word, show a picture, demonstrate a concept or ask a question.
- Use taped information and allow student to read along. Good readers will just read because listening slows them down. Only poor readers will take advantage of the option.
- Do not force a student with dyslexia to read aloud. Do not force him/her to write on the board.
- Carbonless paper can be used for a student to take notes and give the student with dyslexia a copy. The need for writing must be reduced.
- Dictionaries do not help students with dyslexia. Franklin speller or computerized spell check should be used. Typed assignments are preferred.

# Dyslexia and the Adult Learner

By Mike Horne \*.

I teach part time courses for adults for a University Foundation Award (it used to be known as Adult Education). When I started researching into this topic I could find plenty of books and websites about helping children and college students with dyslexia, but very little about or for mature adults with dyslexia.

## What is dyslexia?

Probably to most people it is considered to be a form of illiteracy, an excuse for bad spelling or the subject of anagram-like jokes ("dyslexia lures K O!").

A search of the World Wide Web reveals that there is no single definition of dyslexia and no such thing as a typical dyslexic person. The word itself comes from the ancient Greek - meaning "difficulty with words".

"The dyslexic brain is different from ordinary brains. Studies have shown differences in anatomy, organisation and functioning of the dyslexic brain as compared to the non dyslexic brain. Some people suggest that dyslexic people tend to be more 'right brain thinkers'. The right hemisphere of the brain is associated with lateral, creative and visual thought processing....These neurological differences have the effect of giving the person a particular way of thinking and learning." (Hammond and Hercules) These brain differences mean that the dyslexic person has difficulties with - short term memory, processing sounds, motor skills and visual processing.

"...The majority scientific view at the present time [is] that dyslexia is a neurological condition, usually inherited, which affects mainly those functions of the brain dealing with the processing of phonological information. The result is that mapping the processing of phonological codes (sound information) on to graphical and lexical codes (information on the appearance of letters and words) is fuzzy and poorly specified, and the memory storage and retrieval of such information is inefficient." (Singleton and Trotter 2002). There is some evidence that these functions are carried out in parts of the dyslexic brain when compared with the non-dyslexic brain (Snowling 2000).

Or to put it another way - it is different arrangement of the brain, which can cause periodic problems with reading, writing, spelling, communication, learning or short term memory. Dyslexia manifests itself in different ways in different people and at different times. It affects up to 10 percent of the population (Jackson 2001) and occurrence is not limited to any racial or social groups. It may be worse if the dyslexic is under stress or hurried. There may be secondary problems of lack of confidence or low self-esteem due to undiagnosed dyslexia. It is often hereditary and may be associated with left-handedness, dyspraxia, asthma and eczema.

One new theory (I saw on Ceefax in June 2002) is that it is a problem with the rhythm of language - dyslexics cannot get the correct rhythm when reading, including reading music.

But dyslexia is not the same as illiteracy. There are 7 million adults (20 percent of the population) in England who are illiterate (Hull 2001) - the definition used for that is that they are unable to find a plumber in the Yellow Pages telephone directory. Thirty five percent of 16 to 25 year olds in the UK 'score below level 3 in literacy - considered by international experts to be the minimum level to cope with modern life' (O M 23rd March 2003, page 10). I have seen no information about how many dyslexics are illiterate, but generally poor literacy skills in dyslexics are compensated by higher intelligence which effectively means that most dyslexics appear to have average literacy.

## The English language.

I wonder if the English language itself, particularly in its written form, makes life harder to the dyslexic person?

Thomson (1979) points out that phonetic writing and spelling systems such as English are arbitrary and abstract. The 26 letters used have no relationship to the objects and concepts they represent. A large proportion of those letters are mirror images of each other (e.g. 'b' and 'd'). Although there are some rules about spellings (e.g. 'q' is followed by a 'u'), there are many sounds which can have alternative spellings and meanings (e.g. 'weigh' and 'way' and 'whey'). [[click here](#) for more on this topic]

In his book *Mother Tongue* Bill Bryson (1991) points to the variety of languages that have contributed to the development of the English language, leading to strange spellings - including irregular verbs and plurals of nouns. Words that have been added from other languages sometimes retain their original spellings and sometimes are anglicised (depending on international relations at the time!).

The grammar rules have always been very loose and allow for the development of new forms and words. For example the recent use of nouns as verbs - e.g. a soccer player is now 'red-carded' rather than sent off, an athlete 'medals' by finishing first, second or third (not to be confused with 'meddles'), athletes who set off early have 'false-started' and the score is 'dead-heated' rather than 'drawn' when both teams score the same number of points. [Is it a coincidence that these new words are all associated with sport?]

And what about the teaching? When I was 13, I lived for a month in France and was amazed at the way French was taught there at the time. Long lessons on grammar and so on. Quite unlike the English language teaching I received at school in England. In later years the teaching of English Language in schools became even more relaxed. In 1993 The GCSE was completely assessed without examinations and course work could be produced on a computer using a spell check!

Bad spellings have deliberately become part of our culture - mainly because a company can copyright a product or trade name that is not an already existing word. A well known American toy-shop chain even includes a dyslexic-like reversed letter in its name! I have to ask if we are giving our children a good start in their education by sending them to the 'Happy Kidz Nursery Skool' or similar institutions with badly spelt names?

Are other languages easier for the dyslexic to read and write? Do languages with more phonetic or even non-alphabetic writing easier? Are there the same problems with Japanese *kanji*? Apparently not - Japanese writing uses 2 different systems pictograms (*kanji*) and phonetic (*kana*). The thousands of *kanji* cause fewer problems for dyslexics than the hundred or so *kana* (Thomson 1979 p41-2, Sasanuma 1980).

## **Dyslexia and the adult learner.**

Adults who have gone through "formal education" with un-diagnosed dyslexia have developed their own habits to hide or by-pass the dyslexia. This may mean they have unique (in so far as they are individually developed) learning styles. They also probably have been put off "education" by humiliation and teasing at school (Edwards 1994). And offers of help may achieve nothing or bring back bad memories.

These days young people can be tested for dyslexia by comparing tests of their IQ with their reading age. It is often the case that their IQ for their age is much higher than their "reading age". These can jointly give the impression that the schoolchild is an average pupil, when judged by their written work. So they are not given the teaching necessary to challenge their intellectual ability. [[click here](#) for some more information about dyslexia in children]

For college and University students - allowances may be made in the presentation of assessed work and more time may be given in examinations.

Helping the dyslexic adult is not just about giving them computer packages to help them read and spell - it is allowing them space to learn in their own way. Part-time adult students may not have the time or financial ability to make use of computer packages that may be offered to help them. Students in full time higher education or studying for 50 percent (or greater) of their time are eligible to apply for a Disabled Student Allowance from their Local Education Authority in the U.K.

[[click here](#) for some study skills that might help students with dyslexia]

## **How can a tutor recognise the adult dyslexic in the class?**

The most obvious sign is that they have declared it as a disability on their registration form!

But many may not, for various reasons. They may not realise they are dyslexic, they may not know that dyslexia is now a recognised disability, they may not wish to be labelled as being "disabled", they may not want to be offered

help or have allowances made for their work. They may be coming to the class to learn and be entertained and so don't think it is relevant!

So here are some clues that you can look out for -

A dyslexic student may ...

- Have problems filling in forms (such as course registration or evaluation forms).
- Be shy and hold back in discussions.
- Have problems pronouncing long words - syllables may come out in the wrong order.
- Get confused when speaking in class.
- Have bad short-term memory - e.g. cannot remember names of fellow students or set of instructions.
- Not be taking notes when other students are.
- Be slower at taking notes and ask you to keep overheads/slides on display for longer so that they can copy them.
- Give you excuses for not taking notes - "I've forgotten my pen/paper/glasses." [Adults don't need to make excuses - they can be honest and say "I don't want to!"]
- Invent excuses for not showing you their written work.
- Have difficulty finding things when asked for them.
- Write like they talk.
- Use dialect words in written work.
- Have inconsistent spelling (inconsistent rather than consistently bad spelling), including different spellings of the same word in the same sentence, page or paragraph. Common words sometimes confused with each other. Letters missing from words or words incomplete. The letters from the end of one word may get into the next word (*especially when there is a hard consonant in front of a vowel*). [Missing or drifting letters are more common in handwriting than word processed work, because computer spell checks will spot them easily.]
- Use spellings that only make sense if you use the local accent! (*I must of done that lots a times*).
- Split compound words - such as "school teacher" and "text book" rather than "schoolteacher" and "textbook"
- Send E-mails that have more spelling mistakes in them than other work - because e-mails tend to be typed in a hurry and sent without using a spell-check.
- Have scruffy handwriting (though there may be a secondary enhancement - scruffy handwriting can hide bad spelling!).
- Produce mirrored letters when handwriting (this is more common in children, but I still occasionally confuse 'p' and 'b').
- Have childish handwriting.
- Have handwriting that changes size.
- Have handwriting that is not in straight and horizontal lines.
- Use punctuation in a strange way. There may be too much punctuation, breaking up sentences up, into short readable chunks. Or there may be very little punctuation that leads to long rambling sentences that go on and on and don't ever seem to end because there are no commas full stops or paragraphs to break up the text into something that is more readable because they are not spotted by the grammar check on the word processor or are handwritten.
- Suddenly change in style in written work.
- Ignore advice or instructions about presentation or style.
- Answer their own questions rather than the ones asked by the tutor.
- Obviously plagiarise other people's work.
- Make poor use of quotations and references, but might include unattributed or personal anecdotes in written work.
- Drop out of the course when you expect written work to be handed in.
- Be "technophobes" - spelling problems are more obvious in the printed form and "word processing" packages highlight bad spelling and grammar, which can be discouraging.
- Produce printed work that is a mixture of "American English" and "English English" spellings - from the use of an American spell check programme.
- Have good days and bad days for spelling and reading - Dyslexia comes and goes.
- Not bother with references and bibliography.
- Be compulsive or perfectionist learners - all or nothing.
- Be pedantic and stubborn - having struggled to learn something they may insist that others get it right!
- Rely on their own experience more than that of others (through teaching and reading).

- Be disruptive during class meetings in a cheeky way.
- Arrive late, or go to wrong place, or arrive early.
- Be stubbornly independent learners and writers. They may prefer to work to their own agenda and also not write to please the tutor.
- Not read for pleasure and may read books as if they are newspapers.
- Not appreciate 'good' or 'classic' literature.
- Have a poor appreciation for literary style.
- Be generally not 'well read', so references to Shakespeare etc. will not mean much.
- Confuse directions - left and right, east and west.
- Be generally untidy.
- Have a short attention span and difficulties concentrating.
- Be irritable - particularly if you interrupt their concentration.
- Have difficulties when asked to change tasks.
- Have an active imagination or be an excessive day-dreamer.
- Act impulsively.

None of these things is diagnostic on their own, but a combination may point to dyslexia or some other difficulty. They may of course also be signs of a poor or lazy student, but when you see some of these signs in a clever student then it would be a good idea to have a quiet friendly chat to them to ask if they are having problems studying.

You might find apparent contradictions in dyslexics' behaviour - one may arrive early for classes and another late - this is because one has compensated (or even overcompensated) for a problem (perhaps at an early age), in this example because of the individual has recognised the tendency to forget appointments they have developed very good diary skills.

#### **Dyslexics may also be bad at -**

- Ball sports.
- Arcade type computer games.
- Remembering complicated instructions and taking messages.
- Drama and literature.
- Remembering dates and times of appointments.

#### **Dyslexics may be good at -**

- Problem solving and error finding.
- Seeing both sides of an argument.
- Maths - but not necessarily arithmetic.
- Science - spelling rules for jargon words may be more logical than normal English language.
- higher reliance on facts.
- standardised formats for writing scientific literature.
- compiling lists.
- Writing poetry and individualistic prose.
- Spatial awareness - leading to good use of diagrams, maps, plans and 3-D models (I have heard that one firm of Architects will only employ dyslexics).
- Adventure type computer games.
- Writing computer programs.
- Improvised arts.
- Visual arts.
- Recognising pretentious nonsense.

#### **Dyslexics may respond better to:**

- Lots of diagrams and pictures rather than just text.
- Notes and lists rather than prose.
- Written sequential instructions rather than verbal ones.
- Task based and experiential learning - in which they can find their own methods.



- Breaks or periods of "quality time" to quietly understand and assimilate information received.

### How a tutor can help:

- Do not expect students to read instructions for work in the classroom - give verbal instructions as well.
- Do not ask students to do more than one thing at a time.
- Encourage the development of note taking and diary skills.
- Suggest that students to keep a reflective "learning diary" written up after each meeting.
- Allow enough time for slow readers to read your overheads, handouts, etc.
- Do not discourage the taking of note in your class, even if you have copied your lecture notes or prepared handouts.
- Avoid the use of excessive jargon and offer a glossary of jargon words.
- Encourage students to ask for definitions of jargon words during your teaching.
- Use graphical teaching aids - pictures, graphs, lists, tables.
- Offer to lend a set of lecture notes/overheads to anyone in the class so that they can photocopy them or extract their own notes from them.
- Avoid asking shy students (who may be dyslexics) to read aloud or putting them in the position that they feel that their reading ability will embarrass them.
- Encourage the shy students to contribute to discussions.
- Value their knowledge and abilities.
- Avoid terms associated with formal school teaching. I use the word "quiz" rather than "test" and the word "report" rather than "essay". I noticed that one dyslexic student could write good reports, but when I asked for an "essay" the work was much shorter, poorly structured and less accurate.
- Accept written work in note form if appropriate.
- Offer alternative means of assessment - rather than written reports - see suggestions below. But remember that this places a greater workload on the tutor who has the moral duty to keep a record of the work in case it is needed by external examiners at a later date.
- Encourage the use of diagrams, pictures, drawings, tables and statistics within written work.
- Offer rules for the layout of written work.
- Encourage the use of computers and word processors (if they are within the financial capabilities of the student). This allows the free flow of ideas on to paper that can be checked and edited later - a style of writing that some dyslexics may prefer. But **do not** insist that they are used, some students may prefer to produced hand-written work.
- Ask students how they would like their work to be marked - do they want their spelling criticised and corrected, would they welcome advice on grammar and style, or would they prefer you to just check the facts and concepts.
- Be very careful how you treat plagiarism. For some students simply writing out a neat copy of your lecture notes or copying paragraphs out of a textbook is a proud achievement. Their work should be praised and then you persuade them to think about intellectual property rights and due acknowledgement of authorship.
- Do not force help from a Disability Officer on them - they may not want to be 'labelled'.
- Recognise the difference between dyslexic students, lazy students and busy students. Encourage all to work to the best of their abilities, but do not allow the class to view this as a lowering of standards.
- Most importantly remember that THEY ARE ADULTS - they know their own abilities and have developed their own learning style. Just encourage them to use those skills and not to feel that are inadequate in any way. [click here for some study skills]. "One of the best ways of understanding the learning needs of adults is by consulting them..."(Jackson 2001).

### Dyslexia friendly handouts (and websites) -

(Sometimes words can seem to move around the page, particularly on glossy white paper/backgrounds. Dyslexics have trouble reading from one line to the next. Some dyslexics have poor short-term memory and thus have problems with long sentences.)

- If possible, write in note form and use "bullet points" or number the points.
- Use a sans-serif font (easier to read and to scan with OCR software).
- Don't use a small font.
- Use left justification

- Put blank lines between paragraphs.
- Use short sentences.
- Don't start a sentence at the end of a line.
- Use **bold** to emphasise things rather than *italics* or underlining (underlinig makes the words run into each other) or CAPITALS (these will confuse text reading software also).
- Ask if students would prefer coloured paper or larger print.
- Check your spelling and grammar. Avoid gimmix - 'clever' spellings and missing out capital letters (as done by the former "university of humberside").
- If you use abbreviations make sure they are explained the first time you use them, but it is probably better to avoid them.

I found that the advice on writing handouts for dyslexics is very similar to advice for writing a good web page! People read web-pages on the screen slower than the printed word and tend to scan for key-words, presumably because many are paying by the minute for their internet access or telephone call. (Click here for some tips about writing web-pages).

Compare these guidelines with the suggestions for writing 'open learning' teaching materials in Race (1994, page 55).

I would suggest that there are similarities in the guidelines for writing dyslexia friendly materials, web-pages and open learning materials, and that these could be usefully adopted by tutors writing course materials for any students.

But please think carefully about how you use handouts in your teaching.

### Assessing Dyslexic students' work

Many adult dyslexic students have had bad experiences during their education at school. And dyslexia seems to get worse when the individual is under pressure to perform. So I try not to make a big thing about the assessments and make sure that they are a natural part of the course.

In particular I try to avoid school-type words associated with assessment. So I call an "essay" a "report" (this is more appropriate for sciences anyway). I call a "test" a "quiz". And I never use the word "exam". I like to ask the students to make notes on their fieldwork and practical work, and then produce a neat copy of their results as part of their "project" or "report". I always ask to see their notebook at the end of the course.

I encourage the use of diagrams and drawings in the notebook. And photographs and tables are useful in the final reports.

### Some non-standard forms of presentation for assessment:

- Written work in note form rather than essay format.
- Slide show to class.
- Video to show to class.
- A talk to the class.
- Exhibition or poster of work.
- Poster display.
- Display of photographs.
- Display of specimens.
- A demonstration (informal talk about the specimens or pictures displayed)
- Peer appraisal of the above options (if the student agrees).
- Contribution to class discussion.
- 'Pub Quiz'.
- Verbal quiz for the whole class.
- Individual discussion with tutor.
- Individual verbal quiz with tutor.
- Group work - allows the dyslexic student to contribute the ideas and others in the group write the report or presentation.

- Creation of a web site.
- Dictation - the dyslexic student dictates to a friend, family member or "helper".
- Tape recording for the tutor.

These will place a greater responsibility on the tutor to create a record of the assessment and keep it for use by external examiners if the student is studying for a qualification.

### **Marking the assessed work -**

For all students:-

I ask the students what sort of feedback they would like. Do they want their spelling and/or grammar corrected? Do they want their writing style criticised (probably best avoided anyway)? Do they just want me to comment on the content? Or would they just prefer something encouraging? Do they want to know their marks?

I use my own judgement as well! Particularly if this is not the first class they have attended. It does depend on the level of work expected by the course. I feel that new students should be encouraged, but I may not be helping veteran students if I ignore their lack of progress.

For students that I know to be dyslexic:-

I bear in mind that dyslexia comes and goes so the standard of written work may vary considerably. I am prepared to discuss the work with the student privately - they may be able to tell me whether they were going through a spelling bad patch. The non-dyslexic world sets standards for written work for publication and in assessments, so in the long term I am not helping dyslexic students by ignoring their problems.

There is a difference between someone who is truly making an effort but is being hindered by their dyslexia and those who are producing sloppy work because of laziness.

### **Dyslexia Testing:**

There are tests for dyslexia. But I am not sure that getting accurate and time-consuming tests for part-time adult learners will be useful. They have developed their own style of learning and probably will not change much now. Learning support is probably not available for part-time learners, so testing may raise false expectations of help.

But doing some self-assessed tests and then reading about dyslexia may help the adult learner to understand their strengths and weaknesses. This can be very revealing and insightful. They can then make better use of their strengths and perhaps develop strategies around their weaknesses.

### **Web-sites about dyslexia:**

Adult Dyslexia Organization < <http://www.futurenet.co.uk/charity/ado>>

British Dyslexia Association <<http://www.bda-dyslexia.org.uk>>

The Dyslexia Research Trust <<http://www.dyslexic.org.uk/>>

World Dyslexia Network Foundation <<http://web.ukonline.co.uk/wdnf>>

Dyslexia and Learning a Modern Foreign Language <<http://www.hull.ac.uk/langinst/olc/dyslexia.htm>>

Alladin - tips for tutors <[http://www.alladin.ac.uk/support/dyslexia\\_tutors\\_tips.html](http://www.alladin.ac.uk/support/dyslexia_tutors_tips.html)>

### **Conclusions:**

It is possible for tutors to teach in ways that help dyslexics to learn.

Using non-written materials can also add variety to teaching that will benefit all students.

Taking care over handouts will benefit students with other reading difficulties too.

Marking written work is not the only means of assessing students.

Dyslexia is a disability because the non-dyslexic world sets standards for conformity that they expect intelligent people to follow rather than accept diversity.

Do not confuse dyslexia with illiteracy.

Click [here](#) for some thoughts on learning and teaching.

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[This work has drawn from my personal experience and observations, as well a long interest in the subject.]

\* Please note - I am a dyslexic tutor not a dyslexia tutor or qualified psychologist. The content of this page is intended to help in the tutoring the mature adult dyslexic. You are welcome to print copies for your personal, non-commercial use.

# **Instructional Accommodations and Modifications for Students with Specific Learning Disabilities**

# INSTRUCTIONAL ACCOMMODATIONS AND MODIFICATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH SPECIFIC LEARNING DISABILITIES

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### Introduction

Individualized instructional accommodations and modifications should be based on the learner's unique pattern of strengths and weaknesses, along with a knowledge of specific academic performance abilities.

It is important that you provide both accommodations and modifications for learners with specific learning disabilities. Many teachers select and implement accommodations, but continue to teach information in the same way as they have always done; as a result, the students do not learn as well as they could in the classroom and may not be receiving an appropriate education.

Below, lists of accommodations, modifications and testing modifications are provided. These lists can be consulted as you are developing instructional plans to implement in your classroom. Remember, your major goal is to improve the academic performance of the individual student with a disability. Using this definition of success, the effective use of many of the suggested instructional activities depends on whether or not you have control of a variety of important variables in your classroom. Can you intensify instruction through individual tutoring or small group instruction without ignoring the instructional needs of the students in your class who are not identified? Do you have the physical space

in your classroom to provide for a variety of instructional activities to be ongoing simultaneously? Do you have the appropriate instructional materials and other instructional resources such as computers? All of these factors can play a major role in the extent to which some accommodations and most modifications can be effective.

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## Attention Difficulties

### Accommodations

- Provide preferential seating. This strategy may be helpful if the child is easily distracted by other children or noises. It may also help the child who is unsuccessful in activities that require listening to multiple directions. The student can be seated closer to the front of the room or close to the teacher's desk to limit outside noise and allow for better concentration. A study carrel is often an effective tool here as well.
- Permit the student to physically move and take breaks when necessary. This strategy could be used as a reward, for a child who moves about unnecessarily. It can also be a good break time when a child becomes very fidgety. One strategy may be to place needed objects for an assignment in different areas of the room, so whenever the child needs something he can get up and go and get that particular object.
- Provide a quiet place for the student to work. This can be a very important modification for the student who is easily distracted by other children or noises. It can also be used for the child who often distracts other children. Allowing a child a "area" can be very comforting.
- Allow the student to eat or drink. Although this may be more difficult to allow with other students present, if a student moves excessively, and has trouble concentrating it could truly make a difference in the child's performance. This is not intended to be an all day activity. It can be used during the subject that the student has the most difficulty with, or with a particular assignment.
- Allow the student to listen to music or "noise" through headphones. This outside noise may help the student to stay focused and on task. The child can be placed in a study carrel or another private areas when working independently.
- Change activities often. This is an effective strategy for the child who is often off task, or gets bored easily. Changing activities also helps students to work with time limits as well as manage their time effectively.
- Use physical cues to monitor attention. For example, this can be done by moving around the classroom, touching the learner on the shoulder for encouragement. Some students need frequent reminders to stay on task. A reminder such as this one can serve your purpose without embarrassing the child.
- Actively involve the student in the teaching process. Students will more likely be attentive when they know that they will frequently be asked to participate in a lesson. If this is done in such a way as to capitalize on the learning strengths of a student with attention problems, motivation to participate will more than likely increase.

## Modifications

- Teach the student to monitor his/her own attending behaviors through self talk. A strategy that teaches students to ask questions to themselves such as "I paying attention?" may help students to rely on self monitoring rather than that from the teacher.
- Break large learning tasks into small parts. Teach one part at a time with frequent breaks. This will allow students who are easily distracted to concentrate on only one assignment at a time.
- Build in hands-on activities. This helps to keep a child physically engaged in an assignment. Some students are able to sustain attention longer with one mode of presentation. If hands-on activities are incorporated into a lesson, you have more of a chance to reach the child's preferred learning style.
- Use manipulatives. This is one effective method of building-in hands-on activities and keeping a child actively involved.
- Build in activities that allow the student to move around. Many children with attention problems get into trouble because they do not remain seated and quiet. If you allow the child productive ways to move around during a lesson, the child can burn excess energy while learning what you want her to.
- Provide small group or one-on-one instruction. This helps assure the teacher and child that the student is aware of the assignment and understands the tasks involved. This small group setting may also reduce distractions and enhance student concentration.
- Allow a specified time for the student to talk whether their talk is on target or not. School is often the only time a student is able to see his friends, and there are often very limited amounts of socialization opportunities for students during the school day. Some students need this socialization more than others. It may be one of the few times a student with attention disabilities (who is often being reprimanded in front of his peers) to interact positively with other students.
- Provide time for students to talk and develop or expand ideas. After talking with other students, a child may write more fluidly, or new ideas may be initiated.
- Use mapping. Many children with attention problems have trouble organizing their thoughts. Mapping may help students to put their thoughts into a form that they can translate to a thoughtful discussion or paper.
- Use the Pause Procedure

## Testing Accommodations and Modifications

- Have the student take tests in an environment away from the classroom. The student will benefit by not being disturbed by other activities. As concentration and focus is enhanced, so may be the student's success.
- Allow extended test-taking time. Many students become frustrated because of time constraints. If they are paying too much attention to how much time they have to



answer a question, they may not be concentrating on the quality of their work.

- Reduce distractions by using a separate room or carrel. This reduces the auditory or visual distractions that keep a student with attention difficulties from focusing on the content he has learned.

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## Auditory Processing

### Accommodations

- Provide preferential seating. Students should be seated close to sources of auditory stimuli (to which they are expected to attend) and where their understanding can be monitored. Preferential seating may also place a student as far away from auditory distractions as possible (i.e., away from windows, doors, talkative students...). The practice of evaluating the seating environment of a student may be very important for a student with auditory attention difficulties.
- Speak slowly. This is helpful for students with auditory perceptual speed difficulties as they try to draw meaning from what they are hearing. In addition to speaking slowly, you will want to provide more wait time for the students to process and then respond.
- Simplify sentences. You may want to use no more than two clauses or two adjectives in a sentence if you want the student with auditory processing difficulties to process and retain all that you are saying.
- Keep directions and explanations short and simple. This is beneficial for a student with auditory attention, or auditory perceptual speed difficulties. Short/simple statements may keep the student from losing the message, and increase the likelihood that they understand what they are supposed to do.
- Break instructions into several steps. If instructions or explanations are not able to be put into short and simple statements (as is often the case for older children), they can be cut into short and simple steps. In this way, the student can attend to one step at a time. A visual list of the steps is also helpful.
- Provide written, as well as oral instructions. Often a student with any sort of auditory processing difficulty will do better with information they can see or read. If oral instructions are supplemented with a visual aid (on chalkboard, overhead, poster, student's paper, task card...) student success may be enhanced.
- Cue the student about questions you will ask in discussion that day. This will help the student who takes more time than the rest of the students to process a question and call up the correct answer in time to volunteer in class. If he is given the questions ahead of time, he can respond when being called upon, or volunteer an answer at an appropriate pace.
- Allow increased wait time for responses to questions. This allows a student with auditory processing speed problems time to understand your question and formulate an answer. Often the student knows the answer you want and would like to participate, but is not given enough time to do so. A good rule of thumb is to ask a

- question and then mentally count to five seconds before requiring a response.
- Provide a note-taker. This accommodation can be a lifesaver for the student who has difficulty following lectures and auditory instructions. A note-taker (can be done many ways, with carbon paper, photocopying, giving copy of teacher' notes...) allows the student to concentrate on the lesson rather than the exhausting task of taking notes. It also allows him to watch the teacher and look at visual aids (advantageous because his visual processing skills may not be impaired) that will help him to better understand the content being presented.
  - Provide a study buddy or a peer tutor. A study buddy can help the student with auditory processing difficulties ensure that she has heard assignments, directions, and content correctly. The partners can review assignments at the end of the day, study material, complete assignments, read over instructions, or do many other productive activities together.
  - Provide a copy of teacher notes. This accommodation resembles having a note-taker for the student. If you prepare detailed notes each day from which to lecture, it is very simple to make a copy of them before the lecture to present to the students who need this accommodation. Another benefit of this method is that as you are creating the notes, you can tailor them to the organizational/format needs of the student while still providing yourself with a guide for instruction.
  - Permit the student to write in her textbook. This is a simple accommodation that allows a student to follow along in her text as you are lecturing and write supplemental information in the margins. Again, any reduction of note taking demands for a student with auditory processing difficulties may increase the ability of the student to follow along during your lecture.
  - Provide access to a computer. Computers are an excellent source of literacy activities for students who are having difficulty connecting the sounds of letters and words to their symbols. There are many software programs that allow students to author their own stories, illustrate them and then hear them read aloud as the words are highlighted. This gives meaningful practice to reading.

## Modifications

- Use multi-sensory and multi-media presentations. These presentations allow a student many ways to take in information. A student with auditory processing difficulties is not forced to learn only by listening.
- Provide one-on-one and small group presentations. This allows you to make the auditory information you are presenting more salient to the student with fewer auditory distractions. You can also easily provide visual aids and feedback more readily in these environments. Many students can benefit from these arrangements.
- Use modeling to help the student work on building vocabulary. Often the process of sounding out words for a student with auditory processing problems seems impossible. This student will require much modeling from the teacher and from students who are accomplished decoders. Modeling may also be necessary in the area of understanding word meanings and using words in sentences.

- Color-code prefixes, suffixes or root words. These are important components of language and some that students with auditory processing may not pick up on just by listening to others speak. Using their sense of vision (often a preferred mode of presentation), you can highlight these word components to emphasize in your lessons.
- Reduce the amount of language you use when presenting new ideas to the student. A student who is presented with too much auditory language at once may feel bombarded with so many words and phrases that she can not process and understand what the you want her to do. By simply reducing the amount of language that you use, you may increase the likelihood that she is successful with what you are teaching.
- Provide advance organizers. This allows the student to be prepared for the concepts he will be learning about in an upcoming lesson. The likelihood that he will focus on important facts will be increased if he has already heard these key terms. Otherwise the points you emphasize as you are giving an explanation may not seem any more important to the student with LD than the rest of what you are saying.
- Use visual and auditory supports/aids to focus attention and help the student follow along with the oral presentation. This is another accommodation that will enable a student with auditory processing disabilities to tune in to the most important information that you want them to learn. Some ways of doing this are by using shell outlines, generating an outline as you speak, diagramming relationships, and using maps, charts, or illustrations.
- Call attention to key points with voice intonations and with words (i.e., this is critical). See previous two accommodations for implications of this type of practice.
- Monitor your rate of speech. When presenting important ideas, you may want to speak more slowly. This will add emphasis to these points as well as allow those students with auditory processing speed difficulties time to absorb what you are saying.
- Stop frequently to check comprehension. Students can be asked to paraphrase a concept you have just discussed or answer specific questions. This is critical in order to ensure that students with auditory processing disorders are learning what they need to from a lesson.

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On to Visual Processing

## Visual Processing

Remember: Before making a classroom assignment accessible to students with LD (especially worksheets, seatwork...) be sure to reflect upon what the goal for that assignment is. There are often better ways to assess the child's knowledge about a task than by using a modified worksheet. The key is not to spend precious time making accommodations so that a LD child can participate in an activity that is not an effective teaching practice in the first place.

### General Accommodations for Visual Processing Difficulties

- Provide preferential seating. This may be helpful for the student who has difficulty focusing in on important visual stimuli by placing it more in the foreground of the student's visual attention. The student should be seated close to the visual stimuli during lectures and presentations. Another form of preferential seating could be placement at a study carrel that provides a barrier to extraneous visual distractions.
- Oral Directions. Any time a student with visual processing difficulties is given written directions they should also be presented orally. Many students are capable of correctly completing an assignment if they simply "" the instructions. This is especially true for students who have difficulty with visual memory and are more skilled at remembering instructions that are given auditorily. This accommodation may also be helpful for students who have language difficulties or reading delays.
- Books on tape. Even though a student may have visual processing difficulties, she still can use literature to learn concepts and for enjoyment. Books that have been recorded on tape are an excellent tool for access to such activities. If the child hears the material (literature book, science text, novel...) while following along in the book she can then be taught problem solving and other skills that may have been neglected if the child is left only with the printed text.
- Guided outline for note-taking. Often teachers have an outline of what they are planning to present in class. If this is given to the student before the lesson, he will be able to fill in this outline with notes as he listens to the lecture. This may reduce demands on the student for creating his own visual display of notes, or for copying notes from the board. This accommodation is also helpful for many students with executive control difficulties.
- Note-taker. Often copying notes from a board or overhead is so difficult for a student that she has little energy left to attend to the lecture. If this is the case a "-taker" may allow the student to retain much more of the content of the lecture. Another student can supply notes via carbon paper or photocopying. With this support the LD student can devote all of her energy and attention to listening to the teacher. This accommodation may also assist a student with auditory processing difficulties if she finds herself in a lecture that is only presented verbally.
- Study buddy. A student with visual processing difficulties often has trouble focusing on key information presented in a textbook. An option for this child could be to set

aside time each day for the student to review key points with a peer. Because the opportunity for peer interaction may be very motivating for the LD child, he may gain much more from working with another student than with a teacher. Both students gain from this process of reviewing important concepts.

- Lectures on tape. This accommodation allows the student to concentrate on the content of the lesson while it is being presented and interact in class discussions. Later, the child can replay the lesson as many times as is necessary and write down key facts. Requiring a child with visual processing difficulties (and often accompanying note taking difficulties) to do both of these tasks at once can result in frustration and limited understanding of your lesson.
- Computer access. Many word processing programs now have spell checking, grammar checking, and word prediction features that are a lifesaver for the students with visual processing difficulties. Often student with visual processing difficulties can produce the "" of a word, but can not tell if the word " correct". Spell check and word prediction assist the student in writing the correct word given these basic/beginning sounds. Also writing appears neat and organized - a visual product that the child may not have previously been able to produce by himself.
- Word processing software with auditory feedback. Often when good writers are working, they will reflect on whether the work they produced actually conveys what they wanted to say. For a student with visual processing difficulties, the task of revising work (often from a messy, wordy rough draft with many misspellings) may be very difficult. Auditory feedback components of word processing programs allow the student to hear what they actually have written as it will be read by others.

### Modifications for Visual Processing Difficulties

- One-on-one or small group instruction: Working with students individually or in a small group provides students with visual processing difficulties the opportunity to ask questions, get feedback, and concentrate more easily on the information being presented. Materials can be read aloud to the student without concerns of interrupting other children, and information requiring visual memory can be rehearsed in different formats, providing the student with a learning disability extra practice. This modification is often effective for students with many cognitive difficulties such as auditory processing, memory, language, and attention.
- Read aloud: At times when it would not be practical or necessary to read aloud information to the entire class, and printed material is not yet available on audio tape, it is often necessary to read to the student with visual processing difficulties individually. Often receiving the information auditorily is all that is needed for the student to complete a task successfully.
- Multi-sensory presentation: If a student is having difficulty processing and interpreting information that is presented visually, a multi-sensory presentation is necessary for any new material that the child is expected to learn. Any visual stimulus should be accompanied by an auditory explanation and students should be given chances to practice hands-on and experimental methods of learning. Activities

such as these will allow the student to capitalize on channels of taking in ideas other than just the visual mode.

- Multi-media presentation: Many classroom activities involve the visual presentation of information (i.e. chalkboards, overhead projectors, videos, computers, posters, bulletin boards, film strips and many more) Just as a student may respond better to multisensory presentations, the same is true for multi-media. These presentations often incorporate many different ways of conveying information. Again, the more modes of processing the student has access to, the better the chance he will retain what the teacher feels is important.
- Cliff notes: These book summaries can help the student to understand the main idea of a story/novel without having to read the entire book. While access to the entire story (via oral reading or books on tape) is preferable, in some cases a shortened version of the book is necessary. The student is still able to understand the content of class discussions without having to endure hundreds of pages of reading above her level. Given some success with classroom interactions about a book and chances to practice some higher order thinking about components of a novel, the student's motivation to read and interest in literature can be fostered.
- Video of Novels: Most students often enjoy watching a movie created from a novel they have recently read. For these children the videos can be a source of many conversations and lessons (i.e. compare/contrast, critiques...). For the student with visual processing difficulties, showing a video before and after reading a novel may also assist the child in framing the important parts of the story as well as familiarizing her with its language and content. This exposure may help the child as she tries to organize the many pages of visual information presented in the book.
- Graphs, charts, maps: Some student with visual processing difficulties have difficulty focusing in on what is important when presented with a page full of notes. The words, terms, key ideas, and facts may seem to blend together in a mass of words. For a student with this type of difficulty, a graph, chart, or map may be a lifesaver. These tools provide the student with an automatic visual organization. The key terms are usually obvious, and details are organized and often abbreviated. The student does not need to spend the time and energy it may take to mentally organize the key points of a lesson, but can instead spend more time learning the content.
- Teaching students to map or web concepts: This is often an effective strategy that organizes visual content, highlights key ideas, and includes (but often abbreviates) details. However, a students may not always be placed in classrooms where this is done. If this strategy is effective for a student, why not teach the student to create these maps or webs himself. This will more than likely take much time for both the teacher and the student, but it could be well worth the effort. Instead of a teaching strategy, it becomes a tool for the student to use as he becomes more independent with written material.
- Word wall: Students with visual processing difficulties may be hindered in their writing with spelling difficulties. They may be able to use invented spellings to produces words that are phonetically correct. However, giving them access to numerous words that are spelled correctly can increase their willingness to use new

vocabulary in their writing. A word wall in which new words are added to a growing display each week provides students with this access to many frequently used and content specific words every time they begin to compose.

- Spacing guides: A student with a visual processing disability may have much trouble lining up numbers for math calculations (i.e., long division), using consistent and appropriate spacing when writing. In math the result of this problem is often unnecessary mistakes, while in writing it is often a paper that is difficult to read. Both of these situations can be very embarrassing for the student. Guides for spacing and aligning numbers (i.e., graph paper, vertical lines, darkened horizontal lines...) can alleviate much of this unnecessary frustration.

### How to Modify Written Instructions

- Paraphrase/summarize: If written directions are lengthy and contain many steps, a student may have difficulty remembering all of an assignment. A simple modification of summarizing such directions for a student can result in his being able to successfully complete the activity.
- Chapter summaries: Student text books are often filled with interesting details and enrichment information. For a student with visual processing difficulties, this large amount of text can be confusing and overwhelming. A summary of the information the teacher feels is important from the chapter could reduce these students' frustration when preparing for class discussions and chapter tests. Motivation to study and complete assignments may be increased when the students are given a task that they now feel is possible.
- Audio tapes of content: See above explanation of audio taping
- Written key point summary: When a student with visual processing difficulties tackles a reading assignment her personal goal may well be to get through the printed material and try to make some sense of it. If the student is provided with a key point summary ahead of the reading, she may be able to focus her purpose for reading the material on finding out more about those key points. She has now been presented with the main ideas and can organize the details she encounters around them. This purpose setting activity can also benefit students with executive control problems.
- Highlighting: The more "" a teacher can make important ideas on a page of information the better a student with visual processing difficulties is likely to do. Highlighting texts, outlines, and study guides is an effective strategy for making these key ideas more salient for those students who may get "" in the many words on a page.

### Testing Accommodations and Modifications

- Oral testing: A teacher will wish to provide activities for a student to improve her visual processing abilities. A testing situation is not the time for such an activity. Reading the test orally to a student and/or allowing dictated answers allows the

student to convey what she knows about the content for the test rather than what she does not know about how to maneuver through the writing on a test.

- Extended test time: At times a student is able to successfully complete a test independently. In such situations, the student should be given all the time that is necessary for him to read the questions, find the appropriate space and format for answering, and formulate a written response. A student will not be very motivated to learn the content the teacher has worked so hard to present effectively, if he feels that he will not have enough time to show what he knows.
- Read the students answers back to him: This process allows the student to hear what he has written from an objective source. Often this will be all he needs to ensure that he has included all he intended in his response.
- Careful spacing: A page of a multiple choice test can be confusing for a student with visual processing difficulties. Teachers can be sure to format the test in such a way that it is clear which choices belong with which questions. For example, the four choices a, b, c, & d should all be on the same side of a page. The extra confusion of flipping from page to page or looking from side to side of a page in order to look at all of her choices could unnecessarily result in unnecessary mistakes.

On to Language Disorders

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## Language Disorders

### Accommodations for Difficulties in Oral Expression

- Provide a guide for oral responses: This model may consist of a formal guide or cueing the student before giving an oral response.
- Watch your own language: When introducing ideas; use clear, simple, concrete language. This will ensure that you are using terms that a student can understand and, after hearing you model consistently, possibly add them to the words that she uses appropriately.

### Modifications for Difficulties in Oral Expression

- Require that the student speak in complete sentences. Clearly, but politely point out mistakes in oral expression and model how to correct them. Ask the student to repeat after you. You may also want to ask the student to paraphrase what you have said. These sort of exchanges will give the student immediate, relevant feedback and may help the student with syntactic difficulties understand more about how to speak using correct sentences.
- Use a word wall: Your word wall would consist of the high frequency and content area words that you have covered in class, and will grow throughout the year. As new words are added each week, work with the words. Have the students orally use them in different kinds of sentences, combine ideas using transitional words, and play games with the words. In these ways the student with language difficulties (i.e., semantic and pragmatic skills) can begin to learn the multiple meanings of words.
- Combine "" with "rehearsal". Often, in class, a teacher will use "rehearsal" when teaching a concept. For the student with oral expression difficulties, the task may become "to do the rehearsal" rather than "is the concept to be remembered. If you model appropriate responses and have students repeat them, the student will have an opportunity to hear the rehearsal done correctly.
- When re-teaching use figurative language. At times students with language disorders "not get" figurative language. They may be having a difficult enough time grasping concepts presented literally. The use of figurative language when presenting new information would more than likely get in the way of the student's understanding of the content. However, you may want to use this type of language in lessons in which the student feels comfortable with the terminology and the content. In this way, you can give the child practice with figurative language as well as provide more drill on a skill that has been covered.
- Build the Student's Vocabulary
- Work in small groups encouraging the student to talk: Begin with pairing the student with one other child and gradually increase the size of the group as the student becomes more comfortable. The student will more than likely not become more proficient with his language until he gains more experience and self confidence in

- his ability to communicate effectively. Small groups are an excellent place to begin.
- Help the student put thoughts into his or her own words. Paraphrasing is a critical skill for many aspects of school. A student who has difficulty with language will often have trouble with this skill. If she can be taught to paraphrase information and connect it to her background knowledge, her comprehension and memory of new information will more than likely be enhanced.
  - Provide fill-in-the-blank activities with a word list from which the learner can choose. Gradually eliminate the word list guide and have the student fill the blanks with word(s) she has thought of on her own. This activity can help her to expand her knowledge of words and how they fit into different contexts.
  - Help the learner learn how to relate ideas in sequence. Often, learners with SLD don't have a sense of what they should say first, second, third... Develop "cards" (using words for older learners; pictures for younger, non-readers) for this purpose.

### Accommodations for Difficulties in Written Expression

- Provide a note-taker. Often students who have written expression difficulties exert so much thought and energy into getting on paper the words a teacher is saying (or that are on the board) that they are able to spend very little energy comprehending what is being discussed. A note taker in the form of another student, teacher's notes, audio tape or other form may greatly enhance the student's comprehension.
- Alternate report methods. Oral reports, projects, videos, plays can be rotated with or substituted for traditional written reports in order for a student with written expression difficulties to use his talents when showing a teacher/class what he has learned from a unit/story/passage...
- Reduce the number of words required for the student to learn in spelling activities.
- Provide sufficient time for the student to learn new spelling words.
- Disregard mechanical errors when not learning mechanics. Correcting all mechanics such as capitalization, punctuation, and spelling may seem impossible for the student who had to struggle just to get his ideas on paper. In many lessons this is not the goal of the learning activity. If this is the case, don't penalize the student.
- Give the student the opportunity to correct mechanical errors before final grading. Most writers need to go through many stages of a piece of work before it is completed. For students with written expression difficulties, this process may be even longer. Allow these students to submit work that will be evaluated for content, help them to correct mechanics, and hold final grading until they have had a chance to correct them. It may mean the difference between a student, proud of his work, who wants to write again, and one that finds red marks and a low grade on his best effort enough to make him want to quit.

### Modifications for Difficulties in Written Expression

- Incorporate specific vocabulary-building, spelling, and other language-related

activities into your instructional plan based on identified learner needs.

- Provide access to a word-processing program with grammar-and spell checkers to facilitate corrections of mechanical errors. Even if a student has much difficulty correcting mechanical errors in his papers, he can benefit from seeing words that are spelled correctly and sentences that are written correctly. If provided with these examples of his language used and spelled appropriately, he may be able to gradually improve his first drafts. In the mean time, he is turning in attractive, correct work that makes him proud and eager to write again.

## Testing Accommodations and Modifications

- Give students a word bank to use in short answer or fill-in-the-blank items. A student who has difficulty with language will often not be able to automatically recall words in response to questions but can recognize them when presented with a choice. These students should be allowed to show what they have learned in science, social studies, health, or other subjects without being penalized for their language difficulties.
  - Provide a "" for essay tests and/or a "" for exams.
  - Read answers back to the learner. Often we read what we have written back to ourselves to determine if we have written what we meant to. A student with language problems may need to have this done for them. They can then make modifications where needed.
  - Provide extended time. Often students with language difficulties are able to work independently, but just need extra time to get their thoughts on paper. If allowed this accommodation, they may be able to successfully show you what they have learned.
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## Executive Control Processes

### General Accommodations for Organization Difficulties

- Predictable Classroom Routine: A student with executive control difficulties may resist inconsistent classroom schedules. It will be very difficult for this child to concentrate on important information being presented in he is constantly needing to become oriented to a new routine. Naturally a variety of activities in a classroom are necessary, but they can be done within a basic consistent framework that allows the child to devote his energy towards appropriate class involvement.
- Calendar and buddy review: Some students with executive control difficulties find it almost impossible to remember all of the short and long term assignments for each day as well as the materials that are to be taken home. If these students are given a calendar for keeping track of homework each week, this frustration can be relieved. This accommodation will often not work unless the child is given a support person to make sure that the correct information is written on the calendar, and the correct books are packed to go home. A peer is often an excellent choice for this job.

- Color coded notes: Notes can be adapted in such a way that different aspects of the content (i.e., vocabulary, key ideas, supporting details, tools...) are highlighted with different colors. This may help the student who has difficulty organizing and understanding notes or text. It will also assist the student in accessing relevant information for class discussions.
- Special place in classroom for schoolwork/homework: For that student who has difficulty finding the appropriate materials for classwork, a separate place in the classroom to keep papers and supplies may be helpful. This allows the student to only have on his desk the papers and supplies he is using for one assignment at a time. The student may be allowed extra time during subject transitions to go to her special place, file the work just completed in a preplanned/organized manner, select the supplies needed for the next activity, and return to her seat
- Organizational system: A student with executive control difficulties may have trouble keeping up with important supplies, assignments, books, and other necessary school materials. The transition times between school and home are often extra problematic. If the student is given an organizational system to use he may experience much more success. For example, the child may be given a notebook in which dividers are placed and color coded for different subjects. Homework and classwork would be filed in each of these sections. An assignment sheet is kept in a predetermined spot each week. The use of this system must be closely monitored in order to assure that it is working and being used correctly.
- Show rather than tell: A student with executive control difficulties may have trouble organizing directions and assignments in her mind before beginning to work. This will cause difficulty when she begins her task in knowing what to do. If she is shown a completed example before getting to work, she may be able to understand how to approach the task. For example instead of simply saying, "sure you have five dividers in your notebook", show an example of a model notebook. Often a student will then say, "that's what I supposed to do!"
- Computers with spell and grammar check: A student may have many excellent ideas about what to put into a piece of writing, but may not know how to compose his thoughts in well planned sentences with correctly spelled words. For this student allow him to get his ideas on a word processor and later edit his work with the use of spell check and grammar check. Cut and paste features in most word processing programs can also provide much assistance to the student as he tries to organize his thoughts in an understandable written format.

### General Modifications for Organizational Difficulties

- Metacognitive strategies: These are strategies that make the student aware of what mental processes he is using to learn or rehearse information. Often students must be taught strategies to use as they attack new material, study, or complete classwork. Some student need to be made aware of the fact that they can even use strategies. For example, teaching metacognitive strategies is helpful for the student who may try to do a task a different way each time with no regard to which

procedures worked and which did not. This student must be made aware of what processes she is using and that she can monitor and reuse the strategies that are effective.

- Student evaluation of work progress: For the student who is often off task, some instruction may be beneficial to teach him to monitor when he is and is not doing what he is supposed to be doing. This awareness could be the first step in teaching the student what to do when he finds that he is not on task.
- Graphic organizers: These are very effective tools for students who seem to have difficulty understanding how ideas relate to one another and fit together. Graphic organizers are available for many different forms of content, problem solving techniques, relationships, and information formats. They can also be easily developed in the classroom. They are an excellent tool for lecture guides, study guides, and class activities.
- Step-by-step writing instructions: While some students enjoy being presented with a paper and a topic and told to begin writing, this may overwhelm a student with difficulties in accessing, organizing, and coordinating ideas. This student may feel much more comfortable when presented with specific organized stages for writing. This can be done in small steps and in a preplanned framework.
- Model note-taking: Again, a student may just need to be shown what his final product should look like in order to be successful. For example, as you are teaching, take notes on the board and demonstrate the use of abbreviations and symbols (i.e., that "." can be used for "" that the symbol # can be used instead of the word ", " etc.).
- Symbol chart: As a student is becoming more independent with note taking, you may find it helpful to teach a few symbols each week that can be used during note taking. As they are introduced they can be added to a chart for student reference during lectures. Introducing a few at a time often better than overwhelming students with too many symbols at once. The use of symbols will reduce the writing demands of a student, and allow him to spend more time concentrating on the organization and importance of the content being presented.
- Teach organizational writing strategies directly. Model their use and encourage the learner to practice using them. Provide frequent feedback on how the student is progressing. Often students need to be shown exactly what is expected of them. In a writing activity (in which they must come up with the content themselves) this may be more difficult. An organized writing strategy that can be demonstrated to the student can provide a more comfortable framework in which they can work.
- Use "-to-Learn" Strategies
- Use metacognitive strategies designed to improve writing. Often students with executive control difficulties are not aware of the mental questions good writers often ask themselves (i.e., "I written what I intended to say?", "I use correct punctuation?"...). These questions guide the writing process and provide an awareness of the processes we are using to compose. Students with LD can be taught to use such metacognitive strategies.
- Teach student to judge and evaluate her overall progress. Editing our work is a very important aspect of writing. A student with executive control difficulties may not

know how to go about this task. A consistent guide for completing this process may help her to produce work that she can be proud of.

### Organizational Strategies for Improving Reading

- Teach book and chapter organization.
- Use text preview strategies. This practice will help the student to understand what the components of a passage will be. It provides a guide for self and teacher questioning and can enhance the success of a student with LD in mentally organizing and learning the components of a passage.
- Have students complete organizers in cooperative learning groups. Cooperative learning groups can be as small as two students or larger groups. These groups can be formed after the students have completed a reading. This gives the student with executive control difficulties practice in organizing ideas, but takes some of the pressure off him to do so independently.
- Use graphic representations of text structures.
- Compare/Contrast Text Structure. This practice will allow the student with LD to note the different organization of various types of written materials. If he knows how an encyclopedia is organized, he will be more efficient at locating information. He will then not follow the same strategies to research in the context of a novel (or a newspaper, or the world wide web...) if he knows that the information will be presented differently. It may take much practice and varied experiences for the student to become skilled at many different types of written materials.

On to Memory

## Memory

### Accommodations and Modifications for Memory Difficulties in General Subject Areas

- Give Both Written and Oral Directions: Some students may have difficulty specifically with auditory or visual memory. For these students, giving directions in both oral and written modes may increase the likelihood that a student will remember what it is he is assigned to do.
- Work in Small Groups: Students remember more accurately what they find interesting and motivating. Students also learn from other students. If a learner with difficulty in the area of memory has the opportunity to work in small groups and to share what she has learned with other students, the likelihood that she will remember important aspects of a lesson can be increased. Not only will the student be learning content from peers, but she also will be able to observe and ask questions about the strategies they are using to remember important concepts. The small group atmosphere may be less intimidating for the student with LD, offering more freedom to ask questions and share information.
- Students Quiz Each Other: Many students with memory difficulties need frequent and varied drill and practice. Often, a teacher does not have the time to provide these individual practice sessions for a student. Quizzing with a peer is often a valuable alternative. Both students can gain from practicing of important facts or concepts.
- Students Repeating What they Have learned: Often students with memory difficulties can not remember because they do not store the information to be remembered in an organized and easy to retrieve format. In other words, they have difficulty paraphrasing new information in language they understand, can relate to their experiences, and can recall later. If you ask a student to tell you what he has learned in a lesson (preferably in his own words) this will provide practice with paraphrasing. It will also allow you to assess what he is remembering. If you find it necessary for this activity at first, you can have him repeat key parts of a lesson after you.
- Avoid Overwhelming the Learner: Many facts to be remembered at once may be too much for a student to hold in short term and working memory. If the student is presented with what she feels is entirely too much information, she may not be able to, or lose her motivation to transfer these facts into long term memory. You may wish to select only the most important facts to require that student to remember, or provide some form of memory assistance (i.e., poster, tape recording, graphic organizer...) for that student to use during a lesson in which many new facts will be used.
- Memorization Strategies: Some students with memory difficulties do not know the strategies that successful students use, and often benefit from direct instruction in these strategies. Some familiar examples of memorization strategies include: verbal

rehearsal, pneumonic devices, and visualization. Students may benefit from one strategy over another depending on their learning style (i.e., A student who performs visual memory tasks better than auditory ones will benefit more from visualization strategies than verbal rehearsal). Once they see how their memorization skills improve when an effective strategy has been chosen, students often become very motivated to use it independently and often.

### Accommodations for Memory Related Reading Disabilities

- Peer Tutor
- Reading Orally: This can be done in small groups or to the entire class. Books with repeated lines are especially effective for use with emergent readers if they are read aloud frequently. This type of story allows the student with memory difficulties to hear the repeated line over and over throughout the book and over several readings. The frequent practice of these phrases allows him more chances to join in with the teacher and the rest of the class in an interactive literacy activity. Oral reading is especially effective if the students are allowed to see the print as it is read. This increased exposure to letters/words and their sounds may benefit the student who is having difficulty associating the two.
- Review Vocabulary Prior Reading: A learning disabled student may have difficulty holding in memory and integrating new vocabulary words, decoded words, and the meaning of a passage. A review of the vocabulary words that have just been learned may enhance the student's ability to recall them in text quickly, thereby limiting the demands of the student's working memory. Having too many new vocabulary words, however, may serve to frustrate the student and defeat this process.
- Extended Deadlines for Reading Assignments: Students with memory difficulties are often not automatic in their recall of sight words and decoding strategies. The process of reading a specific assignment may be possible for them to do independently, but they may require extra time. The student who is given this time may have more of an opportunity to decode the material and then link it to personal experience/knowledge that will increase comprehension.
- Reword Passages: Especially in subjects such as social studies and science, passages are often written at the frustration level for students with LD. These passages can often be paraphrased in a way that new text can be written to substitute simple vocabulary for longer words while retaining key facts and ideas. If the text is rewritten at an independent level for the student with working memory difficulties, he can focus only comprehension because decoding will be more automatic.
- Filmstrips or Videos: These modes of presentation can be used to supplement (not necessarily substitute) information contained in a passage of reading. Again, some students may have more success with remembering information presented orally, than visually.
- Books on Tape: A student will not be likely to retain concepts from a passage of reading that requires much energy to decode. If the student is allowed to hear the book read on tape while following along in the text, she will be able to concentrate



on the key concepts to be remembered.

- Alternative Note taking Strategies: Much mental energy is often required for some students with LD to take notes during a lesson. Often, the exercise of note taking involves holding many facts in memory at once, paraphrasing when necessary, selecting key concepts to write, writing them, and often following a prescribed note taking format. If this is the case for a student with memory difficulties, he will not be able to concentrate on the content of the lesson and how he will remember it later. Also, if active working memory is the specific area of difficulty, the student may not be able to successfully integrate all of the requirements for effective note taking. If the student is given a copy of your notes or allowed to have a note taker or tape recorder, he can concentrate on the content of your lesson during the lecture and still have the notes to refer to later. You can obtain tapes of textbooks from North Carolina state warehouses. A fee is charged to your school system.
- Reduced Number of Multiple Choice and Matching Items: If a student feels overwhelmed about the amount of facts she is required to remember, a teacher can pick the most important facts to be learned and allow a student to focus only on those concepts. This success may enhance the success of a student as well as his self esteem.
- Word banks: Some students have more success with recognition rather than recall when trying to memorize facts. For these students, tests that require them to "in the blank" are unnecessarily difficult. They can often be successful if given a word bank that includes the words that will be needed for the test. This allows them to demonstrate what they know about the concepts that you are trying to teach rather than demonstrating what they may not know about rote memory skills.
- Tape recorders for Dictation: Again, some students may have more advanced auditory memory than visual memory. These students may have learned to study by listening to content material (on tape or read aloud) and oral drill. In order to allow them to fully show what they have learned, they should be tested in the same way that they have studied. This can be done by oral testing or by simply allowing them to dictate their answers in a tape recorder. The skill of creating written responses can and should be taught to these students, but not during an activity in which the goal is the demonstration of knowledge in another subject. For a young child who has difficulty remembering how to form letters, and for whom writing is very laborious and imprecise, this accommodation may be even more beneficial.
- Memory Book
- Dictionary, Thesaurus, Spell checker, Franklin Speller: A student who has difficulty storing vocabulary in long term memory may still be able to generate ideas and compose a well written composition. The student should be allowed and encouraged to get her ideas on paper (or word processor) with invented spellings, symbols, or whatever means work for the child. The editing process can then be assisted by these tools to produce a final result that is spelled correctly and has a range of vocabulary included.
- Highlighting: Often textbooks are filled with many interesting facts and concepts that provide background information and enrichment for the main ideas. For the

student with memory difficulties, trying to learn everything in a chapter for a test may be overwhelming. She may want to do well on the test and try to study everything due to the fact that she does not know what information will be included. As a result, she learns neither the enrichment concepts, or the ones you emphasized on the test. A simple procedure to let the learner know what facts/concepts to study is to highlight the information in her text, notes, or worksheets. Generally, it is not difficult to receive permission from your administrator to highlight in a student's book (especially if you plan to keep that book for other students who need the same accommodation in years to come--it will then be already done, or donate it to the special education program at your school), but, if this is a problem, the parents or a volunteer are often willing to "mark" the book for the student for that purpose.

- Word Wall: A word wall consists of the high frequency and content area vocabulary words that have been covered throughout the year. A student who has difficulty with long term memory may benefit from having this reference in the classroom available for any time that he needs them for written or oral expression.
- Color-Coded Work: A student with memory difficulties may need frequent and varied practice when learning a skill. This practice can often be provided in the context of your other lessons, especially in the elementary school. One way to do this is with color-coded work. For example if you are teaching upper case letters (or nouns, directions, addition opportunities, etc.), all capital letters written during that time (for any subject) can be done in red. This gives many opportunities throughout the day and in various contexts to emphasize and practice the skill.

### Accommodations for Memory Related Difficulties in Reading Comprehension

- Review Vocabulary Prior to Reading: See previous section for explanation.
- Highlighting: You can highlight key information within a reading passage to help the student identify what is important. For a student with active working memory difficulties, holding the many ideas/facts that are presented in a passage may be difficult. If they are aware of the most important ideas on which to focus, comprehension may be increased.
- Summaries: If a student is unable to remember all the parts of a passage of text, you may want to provide summaries of the ideas you want him to retain. This allows the student to focus on the most relevant information and spend the extra time he needs learning it. It also gives the student practice with the critical skill of paraphrasing.
- Numbered Paragraphs: You can indicate the location of comprehension questions by numbering paragraphs and indicating the appropriate numbers to refer to in the questions. This keeps the student from wasting time searching throughout the entire passage and allows her to spend more time concentrating on the concept you want them to learn. Again this is valuable time for a student with memory difficulties who may need more opportunities for CORRECT practice than other children.
- Guiding Questions or Outlines: This is another tool that enables the student with memory difficulties to focus on the most important aspects of a lesson. The fewer facts/ideas the student must remember, the greater her chance of success.

- Teaching Paraphrasing: A critical component of reading comprehension is relating a passage to your previous experiences and knowledge. Student must be able to "it in their own words." Students with memory difficulties often have trouble with this paraphrasing process. Therefore, information may not be stored in a way that connects to prior knowledge, or that can be retrieved later. Teaching paraphrasing strategies can enhance the students' ability to understand and remember what has been read.

### Accommodations for Memory-related Math Calculation Difficulties

- Counting on Fingers: At a very young age, students are expected to remember basic addition and subtraction facts. A child with memory difficulties, may not master these facts as quickly as the rest of the group; counting on fingers is often a strategy they employ in order to do the math the rest of the class is completing even though they do not remember the facts automatically. This process should be allowed so that the student does not fall even further behind the rest of the class while still drilling the basic facts. Then, at appropriate times, the student can receive more assistance with automatic recall of facts.
- Multiplication tables/charts: Recitation of multiplication tables is a nightmare for some students with memory difficulties. Some adults feel that everyone can learn the tables if they only "hard enough." This is just not the case for some children with SLD. They may have tried for years with much effort and motivation become automatic with these facts. These students are very capable of understanding and completing difficult multiplication problems, word problems, expressions, equations, and other higher order problems that require multiplication in the process. They can accomplish this if they are allowed to consistently use multiplication tables and charts. Some of these are very small (i.e., on a pencil) and inconspicuous. The student may require more time to complete problems using these, but given this accommodation, can be included in math activities with the rest of the class.
- Calculators: The goal of some lessons is to teach and assess a student's capabilities in basic computation. In such lessons, calculators would not be appropriate. Very little time, though, is often spent on such lessons (especially in the older grades). More often lessons require computation, but are focused on more advanced skills. If this is the case, a student who has difficulty remembering basic computation facts can benefit from the use of a calculator. This tool allows the student to learn the skills he would unnecessarily miss if his progress was guided and evaluated by the mastery of computation skills. Also, the use of a calculator will be an important skill for him to have as an adult.
- Memory Cue Cards: You can provide memory cue cards, especially for following multi-step calculations by posting them or individually. These can guide a student with short term memory difficulties through the process of solving a problem.
- Give math tests on two days: This can be done by having the students set up their problems on one day (focusing on and remembering the new steps and thought

processes they have learned), and solving the problems on the second day (focusing on and remembering from long term memory basic computation facts and strategies).

On to Fine Motor Coordination

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## Fine Motor Coordination

### Accommodations

- Provide Pencil Grips. Some students hold pens and pencils very tightly and it hurts when they write. Give them commercially-made grips which are molded for correct finger positioning. Or make grips from pink, foam hair rollers by removing the middle piece of the roller and sliding the pencil in. This works well to "make" the grip.
- Have the student dictate responses. This can be done to a scribe or into a tape recorder. It bypasses the need for written responses and allows the student to focus on (and be graded on) what he wants to say instead of his motor difficulties.
- Tape the paper to the student's desk. This technique helps student who can't keep their paper flat in the position it needs to be in for writing. Teach students the appropriate posture for handwriting (arm and elbow on table, parallel to the edge of the paper) and tape their paper in such a way that they can maintain this posture.
- Tape paper to the Chalkboard. This technique helps build shoulder strength.
- Allow the student the option of using either cursive or manuscript. This may help the student who has difficulty with all of the pencil lifting and spacing of manuscript as well as the one who needs those breaks in finger grip.
- Allow the student to choose the writing utensil. Some students prefer to write with a pencil and find that it "works" the paper better and offers more control. Others prefer the easy flow of a pen. Allowing a student with fine motor difficulties to choose which writing utensil works best for her may improve the quality of work you receive as well as her comfort with the writing process.
- Provide copies of class notes. A student with difficulties in the area of fine motor coordination should not be penalized in other areas of school. Imagine the difficulty a child would have studying for a test or completing homework in any subject if left with only his handwritten notes for a reference. Have good note-takers take notes and make photocopies (also good for absentees and broken arms - do this as a part of your regular routine).
- Provide access to a word processor. This is fantastic for children who have difficulty forming letters and writing at a pace that allows them to keep up with the rest of the class. Word processing programs can also be supplemented with word prediction programs, spell check, grammar check, thesaurus, adapted keyboards, and many other features when needed. Also when the student prints the material she has written to hand in or display, it comes out in a neat and attractive format every time. Imagine the impact on the self esteem of a child who, due to handwriting difficulties, has previously never been able to produce such a product.
- Reduce the number of math problems the student is required to do. Often the learner knows how to do the problem, but writing is difficult. On a test with 50 questions, for example, have the student show the process for ten of the problems, but provide only the answers for the other 40. Or ask the student to do selected problems (i.e.

questions 1,2,8,10,15,16) if you' changed problem type.

### Testing Accommodations and Modifications

- Reduce the number of math problems the student is required to do. Often, the learner knows how to do the problem, but writing is difficult. On a test with 50 questions, for example, have the student show the process for ten of the problems, but provide only the answers for other 40. Or, ask the student to do selected problems (i.e., questions 1, 2, 8, 10, 15, 16) if you' changed problem type.

### Modifications for Students with Handwriting Difficulties

- Provide Pencil Grips. Some students hold pens and pencils very tightly and it hurts when they write. Give them commercially-made grips which are molded for correct finger positioning. Or, make grips from pink, foam hair rollers by removing the middle piece of the roller and sliding the pencil in. This works well to "" the grip.
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- 

### General Accommodations and Modifications for Testing

Test the same content for all students in your class, but change input/output demands, as needed, for learners with SLD. The requirement of a written response is, perhaps, the most common approach to testing used in the schools. However, some students with SLD can simply not perform well in this mode, particularly if they have language disorders or fine motor coordination problems.

- Reduce the amount of writing required (i.e., give fewer problems to complete).
- Allow the student to perform mathematical calculations in her head and provide answers verbally for most of the problems, writing out selected problems to demonstrate mastery of the process.
- Permit outlining of essay responses.
- Read questions and have the student give oral responses.
- Tape questions and have the student tape responses.
- Have the student demonstrate understanding of key concepts in alternative ways (i.e., timeline, experiment, project).
- Use written tests, but also give grades for other class activities which will contribute to the overall grade (i.e., homework, notebook, discussion, extra credit projects).
- Do not count spelling/handwriting errors.
- Allow extra time for test completion.
- Reduce the number of items required for the student to complete.
- Reduce the number of choices in multiple-choice items.
- Allow the student to write on the test paper, instead of using bubble sheets or answer sheets.
- Teach the student how to use test-taking strategies.
- Prior to testing, provide specific test preparation guides at the beginning of each unit of study.
- Teach students to manage their time well during tests, allowing more time for questions with higher point values and questions which are more difficult.
- Teach students to eliminate choices which clearly are incorrect in multiple-choice items.

For learners with attention problems and language disorders:

- Have the student take the test in an environment away from the classroom.
- Teach the student to find key words and clues in the test questions.
- Space multiple choice responses carefully on the test (don't have choices "" and "" on one side and choices "" and "" on backside of the page).
- Eliminate distracting stimuli from the test.
- Avoid giving extraneous information in the questions.
- Avoid wordiness--focus on what it is you are asking.
- Avoid distracting words and phrases like: " always," " but," " ," " only."
- Allow oral responses to essay questions.
- Reword test items using a simpler vocabulary.
- Rephrase questions.
- Teach students to look for clues to answers which may be embedded in other test questions.

For learners with memory problems:


- 
- Include liberal doses of recognition items (i.e., multiple choice, matching, T/F).
- Under the slot for each matching question, give possibilities (i.e., " ," " ." or "" ;the student will know the answer comes from one of those choices.
- Give the student a word bank to use in short answer or fill-in-the-blank items.
- Allow the student to use memory cue cards to assist with multi-step processes or facts.
- Allow students to use " sheets" for tests (a 3x5 card on which students can write any amount of information they can squeeze into the space). Once they create the card, they often don't have to use it because they have learned the material by having to figure out what is important and writing it.
- Allow students with memory problems to use " Aid Cards."
- Avoid giving extraneous information in the questions.
- Avoid wordiness--focus on what it is you are asking.
- Avoid distracting words and phrases like: " always," " but," " ," " only."
- Allow extended time.

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**Check Writing**

4. Explain that on the next line they will write the same amount in words. Point out that they should begin the amount with a capital letter. Have students look at a posted chart or a handout for the correct spellings of the numbers. Ask students why a check writer should begin the dollar amount as far left as possible. (So that no amount can be added in front of it.)
5. Elicit from students a word or phrase for the memo line that will help them remember how the money was spent. Ask what was the purpose of the check. What did they buy/purchase?
6. Ask what final thing is needed on their check. (A signature.) Explain that usually people write their signatures in cursive. Tell them that you will sign your own name because you must never write someone else's name on a check, not even for a joke. Tell them that is not legal.

|   |  |
|---|--|
|  | NO. <u>500</u><br><u>September 29, 19 92</u> |
| Pay to the order of <u>K-Mart</u>   | \$ <u>10.53</u>                              |
| <u>Ten dollars and fifty-three cents</u>  |  |
| Memo _____  | Signature <u>Garren Walker</u>               |
| <b>SAMPLE - VOID</b>  |  |

### Entering Information in Check Register

1. Explain that after they have written a check, they need to record the amount of the check they just wrote and subtract it from the balance so they can see how much money they have left.
2. Draw a check register on the blackboard or prepare a transparency showing the various parts: check number, date, financial transactions column, a payment or debit (subtracted out) column, a deposit or credit (added in) column, and a balance column.
3. Tell students that they will begin by depositing a payroll check of \$200 which they have "earned." Show them how to enter \$200 in the deposit column. Then enter today's date and add the deposit to the balance.
4. Next, demonstrate where the number of the check, the date, whom the check was written to (payee), and the amount should be recorded.
5. Finally, demonstrate how to subtract a check to get the running balance. Your students may need to calculate the subtraction problem on separate paper.

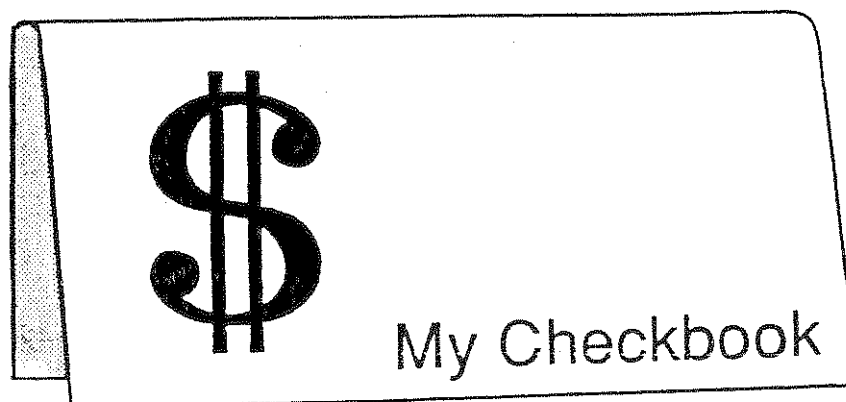
| CHECK NO. | DATE | FINANCIAL TRANSACTIONS | PAYMENT | DEPOSIT  | BALANCE  |
|-----------|------|------------------------|---------|----------|----------|
| —         | 2-31 | Deposit Payroll Check  | —       | \$200 00 | \$200 00 |
| 501       | 3-1  | Stop and Go            | \$6 00  |          | \$194 00 |
| 502       | 3-6  | Century Seven Theater  | \$4 00  |          | \$190 00 |
| 503       | 3-7  | Moorhead Pet Vet       | \$27 00 |          | \$163 00 |
|           |      |                        |         |          |          |
|           |      |                        |         |          |          |
|           |      |                        |         |          |          |

### RESPONDING TO STUDENT WRITING

1. As students write their checks and record their transactions, circulate around the room. Hold mini-conferences with students who need assistance. As they complete one check and the corresponding register, ask them to double-check the number and word amounts they wrote, along with what they wrote and calculated in their check register. Bring together small groups of students to demonstrate this checking procedure.
2. If you want students to work toward particular learner outcomes, give each student a revising form designed to guide him/her to self evaluate. See reproducible Self Evaluation Checklist (9-4) at the end of this lesson.

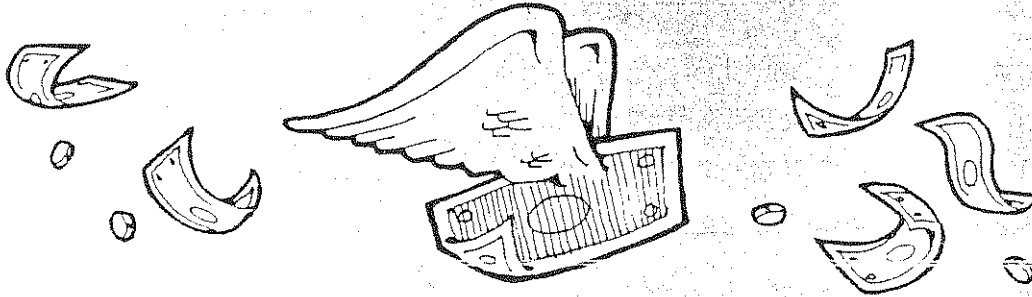
### PUBLISHING

Inform students that over the next week they will get a chance to deposit money in their checking account, pay bills by writing checks, and balance a checkbook register so they will know how much money is left.



## MODIFICATIONS TO ENCOURAGE BEGINNING WRITERS

- Less able students often find more meaning and more motivation when check writing occurs in a simulation. Help students set up a weekly or monthly budget based on income and possible expenses. Then once or twice a day give them a chance to pay bills, deposit money to their account, balance their checkbook, and keep a register sheet to record transactions.



Set up and explain ways students may add money to their accounts such as weekly pay checks for work in each subject, bonuses for excellent assignments and tests, and rewards for good behavior and/or accurate records at the end of the month.

Also instruct students that they will have daily or weekly bills to pay such as rent for the use of their desks, fees for use of the pencil sharpener, and fines for turning in late assignments or talking out of turn and other misbehavior.

Begin by "giving" students a beginning balance of an even amount such as \$90 or \$400 and then make all their bills in even amounts.

## MODIFICATIONS TO CHALLENGE ADVANCED WRITERS

- Ask high achievers to plan a budget including at least three of the following:

Where will you buy your food? Clothes? Toys?

How much will you spend on each?

How much will you spend for your home (or desk)?

To whom will you owe that?

What utilities will you need to pay?

Who will you pay these to?

How much will you spend for transportation?

To whom will you pay this?

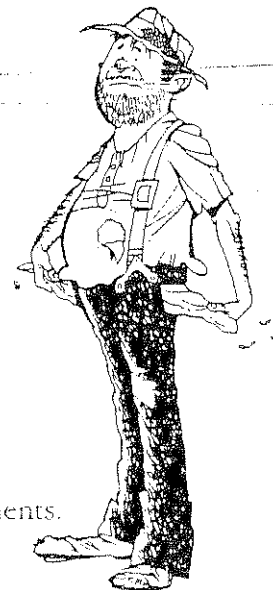
How much for car/bike insurance?

What insurance company will you use?


How much will you put into savings?


Where will you put this money?


- Assign students to check the financial records of other students.



## BLANK CHECKS

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|---|-----------------|--|
|  | NO. _____       |  |
|   | _____ 19 _____  |  |
| Pay<br>to the<br>order of _____ \$ _____  |                 |  |
| _____   |                 |  |
| Memo _____  | Signature _____ |  |
| SAMPLE - VOID   |                 |  |

|   |                 |  |
|---|-----------------|--|
|  | NO. _____       |  |
|   | _____ 19 _____  |  |
| Pay<br>to the<br>order of _____ \$ _____  |                 |  |
| _____   |                 |  |
| Memo _____  | Signature _____ |  |
| SAMPLE - VOID   |                 |  |

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|  | NO. _____       |  |
|   | _____ 19 _____  |  |
| Pay<br>to the<br>order of _____ \$ _____  |                 |  |
| _____   |                 |  |
| Memo _____  | Signature _____ |  |
| SAMPLE - VOID   |                 |  |

## CHECK REGISTER PAGES

| CHECK NO. | DATE | FINANCIAL TRANSACTIONS | PAYMENT |  | DEPOSIT |  | BALANCE |  |
|-----------|------|------------------------|---------|--|---------|--|---------|--|
|           |      |                        |         |  |         |  |         |  |
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| CHECK NO. | DATE | FINANCIAL TRANSACTIONS | PAYMENT |  | DEPOSIT |  | BALANCE |  |
|-----------|------|------------------------|---------|--|---------|--|---------|--|
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|           |      |                        |         |  |         |  |         |  |

| CHECK NO. | DATE | FINANCIAL TRANSACTIONS | PAYMENT |  | DEPOSIT |  | BALANCE |  |
|-----------|------|------------------------|---------|--|---------|--|---------|--|
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|           |      |                        |         |  |         |  |         |  |
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|           |      |                        |         |  |         |  |         |  |
|           |      |                        |         |  |         |  |         |  |

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ (9-3)

### WORDS FOR NUMBERS

One ..... 1  
Two ..... 2  
Three ..... 3  
Four ..... 4  
Five ..... 5  
Six ..... 6  
Seven ..... 7  
Eight ..... 8  
Nine ..... 9  
Ten ..... 10

Eleven ..... 11  
Twelve ..... 12  
Thirteen ..... 13  
Fourteen ..... 14  
Fifteen ..... 15  
Sixteen ..... 16  
Seventeen ..... 17  
Eighteen ..... 18  
Nineteen ..... 19

Twenty ..... 20  
Thirty ..... 30  
Forty ..... 40  
Fifty ..... 50  
Sixty ..... 60  
Seventy ..... 70  
Eighty ..... 80  
Ninety ..... 90  
One-Hundred ... 100

dollars                      cents



Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ (9-4)

### SELF EVALUATION CHECKLIST

Reread your check and the record you made of it.

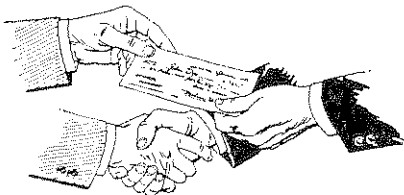
#### Check

1. Did you enter today's date?      Yes    No
2. Did you write the name of the person or business on the top line?      Yes    No  
Is the first letter of each part of the name capitalized?      Yes    No
3. Did you write the amount of the payment in number form?      Yes    No  
How clear and easy to read is your handwriting?      Hard to Read    Ok    Easy to Read
4. Did you write the amount of the payment in word form?      Yes    No  
How clear and easy to read is your handwriting?      Hard to Read    Ok    Easy to Read
5. Did you write a note to yourself telling what the check was for?      Yes    No
6. Did you sign your name in cursive handwriting at the bottom of the check?      Yes    No

#### Check Register

1. Did you enter your financial transaction in the check register?      Yes    No
2. What was your running balance? \_\_\_\_\_  
What did you find out when you double checked the balance?  
\_\_\_\_\_

I have carefully reviewed and revised my check and the check register.



\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature



# CHECK WRITING

Even though check writing does not require putting thoughts into sentences or paragraphs, it is an important type of writing. Writing checks is very appealing to older students who see adults writing checks all the time. This lesson can be taught in conjunction with a math lesson or in your language arts program either as a short one day experience or spread out over a week or more.

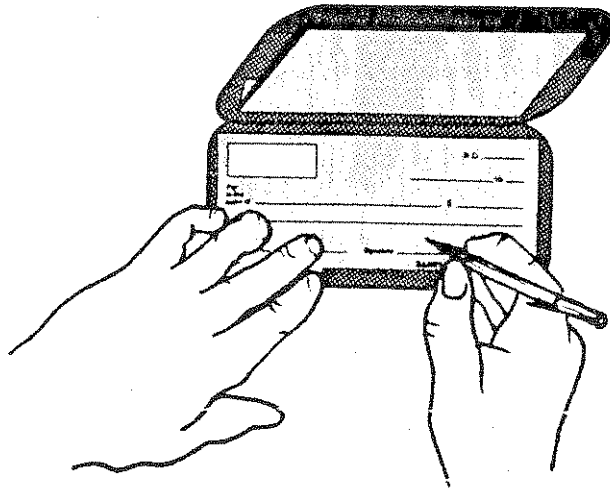
## OBJECTIVES

Students will write ten checks and keep track of expenditures in a check register. To do this, they will:

- Write today's date on each check.
- Write the full name of the person to whom the check is written.
- Capitalize proper names and titles of businesses.
- Write the amount of payment in both number and word form.
- Use legible handwriting.
- Write a reminder on the "memo" line telling what the check was for.
- Sign the check in cursive handwriting.
- Enter each financial transaction in the check register and keep a running balance.

## MOTIVATORS

1. Ask students why people have checking accounts and why they write checks instead of using cash. (Good way to pay bills, safer than carrying cash, helps keep records of purchases/expenses.) Show your students your checkbook and how you keep track of the checks you write.
2. Tape a large check made out of a sheet of chart paper or butcher paper to the chalkboard and demonstrate writing a check for a really large amount such as four thousand sixty-eight dollars and thirty-two cents. Go through all six steps of check writing: date, to whom, amount in numbers, amount in words, memo, signature.

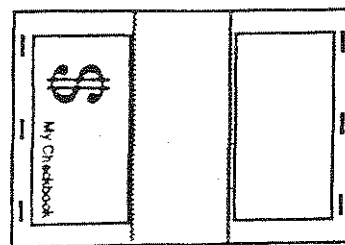
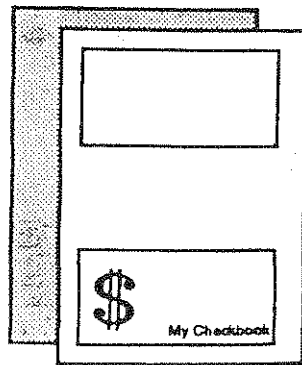


3. Have students construct their own checkbooks. Explain that they will get to write checks to "pay" for items and manage their own money.

Ahead of time duplicate 10 blank checks (two checks per day for one week), 3 check register pages, and 1 checkbook cover for each student. See reproducibles 1 and 2. Give each student the blank checks, check registers, checkbook cover, and a blank sheet of colored paper and provide the following instructions for constructing the checkbook.

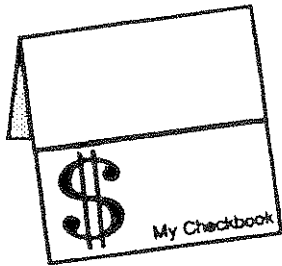
(If you desire, checkbook covers can be made from sheets of colorful wallpaper instead of the copied forms. These covers look especially sharp! If you want this unit to last longer than a week, students can "purchase" new checks from you at a later date. Adding more checks now will make it very difficult to staple the checks to the checkbook cover.)

1. Lay the blank sheet of colored paper on your desk and cover it with the checkbook cover.
2. Staple the checkbook cover and the colored sheet of paper together along both shorter edges.



← staple

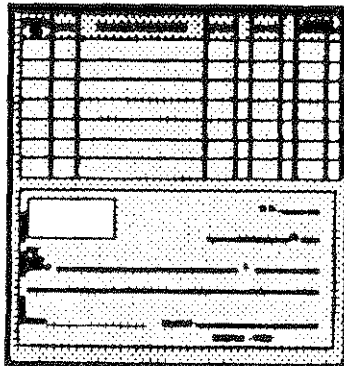
3. Fold both sheets of paper together on the fold lines. Be sure that the checkbook cover always faces out. Crease the folds with your fingernail.



4. Fold the lower part of the checkbook up to make a pocket. Now staple along the right edge of the pocket three times. You should staple through all four sheets of the checkbook cover. Do not staple the left side yet. That's where the checks will be placed.
5. Next cut out your checks and stack them neatly.
6. Lay all of your blank checks on top of the pocket you made.
7. Next staple three times along the left edge through the checks and the two parts of the checkbook cover. Your checks must be loose on the right edge so that you will be able to tear them out.



8. Finally staple the check register pages to the inside of the checkbook cover above the blank checks.



**BRAINSTORMING**

Tell students they will brainstorm ideas for checks they might write.

| <u>To whom will the check be paid?</u>  | <u>Memo</u>  |
|---|--|
| <b>Arnie Freeberg</b><br><b>Coast-to-Coast Hardware</b><br><b>Sun Mart Grocery</b><br><b>Stop and Go</b><br><b>Target</b> | <b>New ten speed bike</b><br><b>Movie tickets</b><br><b>Case of Diet Pepsi</b> |
| <u>Amount of Check</u>  |  |
| <b>\$ 1.59 . . . .</b>  | <b>One dollar and fifty-nine cents</b>   |
| <b>\$76.00 . . . .</b>  | <b>Seventy-six dollars and no cents</b>  |

**Key Questions**

1. *What is one item you would like to buy?*
2. *How much does the item cost? What will be the amount of the check? How many dollars? How many cents? (Write the amount in numbers and words. Post a chart listing spellings of numbers and demonstrate using it. See Reproducible 9-3.)*
3. *In what store might you buy the item? To whom will you make out the check?*
4. *Repeat this process for additional items and/or expenses.*

**GROUP COMPOSING**

Explain to students that you will help the class write a check, using the information from their brainstorming. Ask why they must use a pen and not a pencil when writing a check. (So that no one can change any information on the check.)

**Writing the Check**

1. Tell students the first thing they'll do is date their check. Ask what today's date is and elicit the correct way to write the date. (Capitalize month; comma after day.) As students supply information, fill in a sample check taped to the chalkboard.
2. Explain that on the next line (Pay to the order of \_\_\_\_\_) they will write the name of the person or business they are paying. Ask how they should begin a person's first and last name or the name of a business? (Capital letter.)
3. Have students choose an amount for the check. As you write the amount, explain that a dollar sign is written in front of the dollar amount and a decimal before the cents.

# **MOST COMMONLY WORD FAMILY WORDS**

## Most Useful Word Family Words

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The following list contains the most common word families in our language. Most of the words were compiled by Wylie and Durrell, 1970.

| <b>-ack</b> | <b>-ail</b> | <b>-ain</b> | <b>-ake</b> | <b>-ale</b> | <b>-ame</b> | <b>-an</b>  | <b>-ank</b> |
|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| back        | bail        | lain        | bake        | bale        | came        | ban         | bank        |
| hack        | fail        | main        | cake        | dale        | dame        | can         | dank        |
| lack        | hail        | pain        | fake        | gale        | fame        | fan         | hank        |
| pack        | jail        | rain        | lake        | hale        | game        | man         | lank        |
| quack       | mail        | vain        | make        | male        | lame        | pan         | sank        |
| rack        | nail        | wain        | quake       | pale        | name        | ran         | tank        |
| sack        | pail        | brain       | rake        | sale        | same        | tan         | yank        |
| tack        | quail       | chain       | take        | tale        | tame        | van         | blank       |
| black       | rail        | drain       | wake        | scale       | blame       | bran        | clank       |
| clack       | sail        | gain        | brake       | shale       | flame       | clan        | crank       |
| crack       | tail        | grain       | drake       | stale       | frame       | flan        | drank       |
| knack       | wail        | plain       | flake       | whale       | shame       | plan        | flank       |
| shack       | flail       | slain       | shake       |             |             | scan        | plank       |
| slack       | frail       | spain       | snake       |             |             | span        | prank       |
| smack       | snail       | sprain      | stake       |             |             | than        | shrank      |
| snack       | trail       | stain       | sake        |             |             |             | spank       |
| stack       |             | strain      |             |             |             |             | thank       |
| track       |             | train       |             |             |             |             |             |
| whack       |             |             |             |             |             |             |             |
| <b>-ap</b>  | <b>-ash</b> | <b>-at</b>  | <b>-ate</b> | <b>-aw</b>  | <b>-ay</b>  | <b>-eat</b> | <b>-ell</b> |
| gap         | bash        | bat         | date        | caw         | bay         | beat        | bell        |
| lap         | cash        | cat         | fate        | gnaw        | day         | feat        | cell        |
| map         | crash       | fat         | gate        | jaw         | gay         | heat        | dell        |

|             |             |             |             |              |             |            |             |
|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|------------|-------------|
| nap         | dash        | gnat        | hate        | law          | hay         | meat       | dwell       |
| rap         | gash        | hat         | late        | paw          | jay         | neat       | fell        |
| sap         | hash        | mat         | mate        | raw          | lay         | peat       | jell        |
| tap         | lash        | pat         | rate        | saw          | may         | seat       | knell       |
| yap         | mash        | rat         | crate       | claw         | nay         | bleat      | sell        |
| chap        | rash        | sat         | grate       | draw         | pay         | cheat      | tell        |
| clap        | sash        | tat         | plate       | flaw         | quay        | cleat      | well        |
| flap        | brash       | vat         | skate       | slaw         | ray         | pleat      | yell        |
| scrap       | clash       | brat        | state       | squaw        | say         | treat      | quell       |
| slap        | flash       | chat        |             | straw        | way         | wheat      | shell       |
| snap        | slash       | flat        |             |              | bray        |            | smell       |
| strap       | smash       | that        |             |              | clay        |            | spell       |
| trap        | stash       |             |             |              | cray        |            | swell       |
| wrap        | thrash      |             |             |              | ray         |            |             |
|             | trash       |             |             |              | gray        |            |             |
|             |             |             |             |              | play        |            |             |
|             |             |             |             |              | pray        |            |             |
|             |             |             |             |              | slay        |            |             |
|             |             |             |             |              | spray       |            |             |
|             |             |             |             |              | stay        |            |             |
|             |             |             |             |              | stray       |            |             |
|             |             |             |             |              | sway        |            |             |
|             |             |             |             |              | tray        |            |             |
| <b>-est</b> | <b>-ice</b> | <b>-ick</b> | <b>-ide</b> | <b>-ight</b> | <b>-ill</b> | <b>-in</b> | <b>-ine</b> |
| best        | dice        | kick        | bide        | knight       | bill        | bin        | dine        |
| guest       | ice         | iick        | ide         | light        | dill        | din        | fine        |
| jest        | lice        | pick        | ride        | might        | fill        | fin        | line        |
| lest        | mice        | quick       | side        | night        | gill        | gin        | mine        |
| nest        | nice        | sick        | tide        | right        | hill        | kin        | nine        |
| pest        | rice        | tick        | wide        | sight        | ill         | pin        | pine        |
| rest        | vice        | wick        | bride       | tight        | jill        | sin        | tine        |
| test        | price       | brick       | chide       | blight       | kill        | tin        | vine        |
| vest        | slice       | chick       | glide       | bright       | mill        | win        | wine        |
| west        | spice       | click       | pride       | flight       | pill        | chin       | brine       |
| zest        | splice      | flick       | slide       | fright       | quill       | grin       | shine       |

|  |  |  |   |   |  |   |   |
|--|--|--|---|---|--|---|---|
| blest<br>chest<br>crest<br>quest<br>wrest  | twice<br>thrice  | slick<br>stick<br>thick<br>trick   | snide<br>stride   | plight<br>slight  | rill<br>sill<br>till<br>will<br>chill<br>drill<br>frill<br>grill<br>skill<br>spill<br>still<br>swill<br>thrill<br>trill<br>twill | shin<br>skin<br>spin<br>thin<br>twin  | shrine<br>spine<br>swine<br>whine   |
| <b>-ing</b>  | <b>-ink</b>  | <b>-ip</b>   | <b>-it</b>  | <b>-ock</b>   | <b>-oke</b>  | <b>-op</b>  | <b>-ore</b>   |
| bing<br>ding<br>king<br>ping<br>ring<br>sing<br>wing<br>zing<br>bring<br>cling<br>fling<br>sling<br>spring<br>sting<br>string<br>swing<br>thing<br>wring | kink<br>link<br>mink<br>pink<br>rink<br>sink<br>wink<br>blink<br>brink<br>chink<br>clink<br>drink<br>shrink<br>slink<br>stink<br>think | dip<br>hip<br>lip<br>nip<br>quip<br>rip<br>sip<br>tip<br>zip<br>blip<br>chip<br>clip<br>drip<br>flip<br>grip<br>ship<br>skip<br>slip<br>snip | bit<br>fit<br>hit<br>it<br>kit<br>lit<br>pit<br>sit<br>wit<br>flit<br>grit<br>knit<br>quit<br>skit<br>slit<br>spit<br>split<br>twit | dock<br>hock<br>knock<br>lock<br>mock<br>rock<br>sock<br>tock<br>block<br>clock<br>crock<br>flock<br>frock<br>shock<br>smock<br>stock | joke<br>poke<br>woke<br>yoke<br>broke<br>choke<br>smoke<br>spoke<br>stoke<br>stroke  | bob<br>cop<br>hop<br>mop<br>pop<br>sop<br>top<br>chop<br>crop<br>drop<br>flop<br>plop<br>prop<br>shop<br>slop<br>stop | bore<br>core<br>fore<br>gore<br>more<br>pore<br>sore<br>tore<br>wore<br>chore<br>score<br>shore<br>snore<br>spore<br>store<br>swore |



|            |             |                       |             |             |  |  |  |
|------------|-------------|-----------------------|-------------|-------------|--|--|--|
|            |             | strip<br>trip<br>whip |             |             |  |  |  |
| <b>-ot</b> | <b>-uck</b> | <b>-ug</b>            | <b>-ump</b> | <b>-unk</b> |  |  |  |
| cot        | buck        | bug                   | bump        | bunk        |  |  |  |
| dot        | duck        | dug                   | dump        | dunk        |  |  |  |
| got        | luck        | hug                   | hump        | funk        |  |  |  |
| hot        | muck        | jug                   | jump        | hunk        |  |  |  |
| jot        | puck        | lug                   | lump        | junk        |  |  |  |
| knot       | suck        | mug                   | pump        | punk        |  |  |  |
| lot        | tuck        | pug                   | chump       | sunk        |  |  |  |
| not        | cluck       | rug                   | clump       | chunk       |  |  |  |
| pot        | pluck       | tug                   | frump       | flunk       |  |  |  |
| rot        | shuck       | chug                  | grump       | plunk       |  |  |  |
| tot        | stuck       | drug                  | plump       | shrunk      |  |  |  |
| blot       | struck      | plug                  | slump       | skunk       |  |  |  |
| clot       | truck       | shrug                 | stump       | slunk       |  |  |  |
| plot       |             | slug                  | thump       | spunk       |  |  |  |
| shot       |             | smug                  | trump       | stunk       |  |  |  |
| slot       |             | snug                  |             | trunk       |  |  |  |
| spot       |             | thug                  |             |             |  |  |  |
| trot       |             |                       |             |             |  |  |  |

<http://www.wilearns.com/apps/Default.asp?cid=522>

**MOST COMMONLY USED WORDS IN  
NEWSPAPERS AND MAGAZINES**

# The 3000 Most Commonly Used Words in the United States

## The 1st and 2nd 100 Words

|             |               |            |             |                |               |            |
|-------------|---------------|------------|-------------|----------------|---------------|------------|
| 1. about    | 28. can       | 55. have   | 82. made    | 109. or        | 136. take     | 163. want  |
| 2. after    | 29. come      | 56. he     | 83. make    | 110. other     | 137. tell     | 164. water |
| 3. again    | 30. could     | 57. help   | 84. man     | 111. our       | 138. than     | 165. way   |
| 4. air      | 31. day       | 58. her    | 85. many    | 112. out       | 139. that     | 166. we    |
| 5. all      | 32. did       | 59. here   | 86. may     | 113. over      | 140. the      | 167. well  |
| 6. along    | 33. different | 60. him    | 87. me      | 114. own       | 141. them     | 168. went  |
| 7. also     | 34. do        | 61. his    | 88. men     | 115. part      | 142. then     | 169. were  |
| 8. an       | 35. does      | 62. home   | 89. might   | 116. people    | 143. there    | 170. what  |
| 9. and      | 36. don't     | 63. house  | 90. more    | 117. place     | 144. these    | 171. when  |
| 10. another | 37. down      | 64. how    | 91. most    | 118. put       | 145. they     | 172. where |
| 11. any     | 38. each      | 65. I      | 92. Mr.     | 119. read      | 146. thing    | 173. which |
| 12. are     | 39. end       | 66. if     | 93. must    | 120. right     | 147. think    | 174. while |
| 13. around  | 40. even      | 67. in     | 94. my      | 121. said      | 148. this     | 175. who   |
| 14. as      | 41. every     | 68. into   | 95. name    | 122. same      | 149. those    | 176. why   |
| 15. at      | 42. few       | 69. is     | 96. never   | 123. saw       | 150. thought  | 177. will  |
| 16. away    | 43. find      | 70. it     | 97. new     | 124. say       | 151. three    | 178. with  |
| 17. back    | 44. first     | 71. its    | 98. next    | 125. see       | 152. through  | 179. work  |
| 18. be      | 45. for       | 72. just   | 99. no      | 126. she       | 153. time     | 180. world |
| 19. because | 46. found     | 73. know   | 100. not    | 127. should    | 154. to       | 181. world |
| 20. been    | 47. from      | 74. large  | 101. now    | 128. show      | 155. together | 182. would |
| 21. before  | 48. get       | 75. last   | 102. number | 129. small     | 156. too      | 183. write |
| 22. below   | 49. give      | 76. left   | 103. of     | 130. so        | 157. two      | 184. year  |
| 23. between | 50. go        | 77. like   | 104. off    | 131. some      | 158. under    | 185. you   |
| 24. both    | 51. good      | 78. line   | 105. old    | 132. something | 159. up       | 186. your  |
| 25. but     | 52. great     | 79. little | 106. on     | 133. sound     | 160. us       | 187. was   |
| 26. by      | 53. had       | 80. long   | 107. one    | 134. still     | 161. use      |            |
| 27. came    | 54. has       | 81. look   | 108. only   | 135. such      | 162. very     |            |

# The 3rd and 4th 100 Words

|             |              |               |              |               |              |
|-------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|
| 1. able     | 28. children | 55. fish      | 82. kind     | 109. paper    | 136. story   |
| 2. above    | 29. city     | 56. five      | 83. knew     | 110. parts    | 137. sun     |
| 3. across   | 30. close    | 57. food      | 84. known    | 111. perhaps  | 138. sure    |
| 4. add      | 31. cold     | 58. form      | 85. land     | 112. picture  | 139. table   |
| 5. against  | 32. country  | 59. four      | 86. later    | 113. play     | 140. though  |
| 6. ago      | 33. course   | 60. front     | 87. learn    | 114. point    | 141. today   |
| 7. almost   | 34. cut      | 61. gave      | 88. let      | 115. ready    | 142. told    |
| 8. among    | 35. didn't   | 62. given     | 89. letter   | 116. red      | 143. took    |
| 9. animal   | 36. dog      | 63. got       | 90. life     | 117. remember | 144. top     |
| 10. answer  | 37. done     | 64. green     | 91. light    | 118. rest     | 145. toward  |
| 11. became  | 38. door     | 65. ground    | 92. live     | 119. room     | 146. tree    |
| 12. become  | 39. draw     | 66. group     | 93. living   | 120. run      | 147. try     |
| 13. began   | 40. during   | 67. grow      | 94. making   | 121. school   | 148. turn    |
| 14. behind  | 41. early    | 68. half      | 95. mean     | 122. sea      | 149. United  |
| 15. being   | 42. earth    | 69. hand      | 96. means    | 123. second   | 150. until   |
| 16. better  | 43. eat      | 70. hard      | 97. money    | 124. seen     | 151. upon    |
| 17. black   | 44. enough   | 71. heard     | 98. morning  | 125. sentence | 152. using   |
| 18. best    | 45. ever     | 72. high      | 99. mother   | 126. several  | 153. usually |
| 19. body    | 46. example  | 73. himself   | 100. move    | 127. short    | 154. white   |
| 20. book    | 47. eye      | 74. however   | 101. Mrs.    | 128. shown    | 155. whole   |
| 21. boy     | 48. face     | 75. I'll      | 102. near    | 129. since    | 156. wind    |
| 22. brought | 49. family   | 76. I'm       | 103. night   | 130. six      | 157. without |
| 23. call    | 50. far      | 77. idea      | 104. nothing | 131. slide    | 158. yes     |
| 24. cannot  | 51. father   | 78. important | 105. once    | 132. sometime | 159. yet     |
| 25. car     | 52. feel     | 79. inside    | 106. open    | 133. soon     | 160. young   |
| 26. certain | 53. feet     | 80. John      | 107. order   | 134. space    |              |
| 27. change  | 54. fire     | 81. keep      | 108. page    | 135. States   |              |

# **Synonyms**

# Synonyms

absent – away, gone

dish – plate

spy – see, look, sneak

tiny – little, small

large – big, huge, gigantic

carpet – rug, mat

peaceful – calm, quiet

forest – trees, woods

tired – sleep, weary

package – bundle

crooked – uneven

shake – quiver, tremble

sofa – couch

wicked – bad, mean, nasty

beautiful – pretty

cold – chilly

change – alter

afraid – scared, fearful

make-believe – pretend

sad – down, depressed

(1973). *Manual of diagnostic Tests and Activities: Reading, K – 3*  
Cambridge, Ma: Edco Reading and Learning Center.

# Synonyms

joyful – happy  
keep – hold  
little – tiny  
lively – merry  
angry – cross  
mighty – powerful  
mild – gentle  
moist – damp  
neat – clean  
odd – strange  
large – huge  
lift – raise  
pale – dim  
hop – jump  
fast – quick  
finish – end  
happy – gay  
sleep – slumber  
ill – sick  
bundle – package  
flower – bloom  
pull – drag

cruel – unkind  
wet – damp  
dull – dim  
drop – fall  
father – dad  
circle – ring  
bowl – dish  
bottom – base  
tear – rip  
cord – string  
cover – lid  
painful – sore  
noise – sound  
queer – odd  
rapid – swift  
seek – hunt  
steal – rob  
stiff – hard  
snug – cozy  
dirty – soiled  
peep – look  
dirty – soiled

# **BASIC COMPUTER TERMS**



## **Basic Computer Terms**

**Bookmarks** - A filing system built into the browser that allows the user to keep a list of favorite web sites.

**Browser (Netscape Navigator or Internet Explorer)** - *software program* that allows you to explore, view and hear content on the WWW. Web browsers allow you to easily access and view pictures, movies, text, animation and sound.

**CD-ROMS** - Like a floppy drive, only not floppy.... it's more rigid. A cd-rom can contain a lot more information than a floppy disk.

**CD-ROM Drive** The part of the computer where cd-roms are inserted.

**Desktop** - The backdrop that all other windows are displayed on. On it are icons which represent files. These files can be folders, documents, graphics, programs, shortcuts or printers. The two most common icons are *My Computer*, and *Recycle Bin*.

**My Computer** - An icon found on the Desktop which allows you to view files easily.

**Recycle Bin** - Where your deleted items end up.

**Start Button** - Found in lower left corner of the screen. The *Start Button* can be used to find programs or files, get help, change settings, etc.

**Floppy Disk** - Small disk that holds information. The most common size is 3.5".

**Floppy Drive** - The part of the computer where floppy disks are inserted (also referred to as the "A" Drive).

**Hard Drive** - Where computer information and programs are stored inside a computer. The hard drive is also referred to as the "C" or "D" Drive.

**Hardware** - Term used for the physical components of a computer.

**HomePage** - 1) What you see when you first open your web browser;  
2) The first document of a web site

**Internet** - Millions of interconnected computers worldwide that allow people to find and use information and communicate with others.

**Internet Service Provider (ISP)** - A *company* that provides Internet access. Popular local providers are AOL and Earthlink, Stratos and CoreComm.

**Keyboard** - What you type on.

**Monitor** - The screen you look at... looks like a TV.

**Mouse** - Device used to move the pointer around on the screen

**Pointer** - The arrow that moves around on the screen. When the arrow passes over a *link*, it changes to a *hand*. If you click on the link, you will see an *hourglass* which means the data is being sent to your computer.

**Point** - Roll the mouse so that the tip of the pointer is touching on a specific area or command.

**Click** - Press the mouse button once

**Double-Click** - Press the mouse button twice in rapid succession

**Click and Drag** - *Point* to an object, *click* and hold the left mouse button, and then move (*drag*) the object to another location.

**Windows 95, 98, or NT** - An *operating system*, or program, that makes computers easier to use. Windows uses graphic images, or icons, in place of complicated commands. This allows you to run programs and perform tasks by "clicking" on the icons.

**World Wide Web (WWW)** - One part of the Internet... it contains graphics and *links* (to jump from one page to another)

# **COMPUTER SKILLS ASSESSMENT**

| Computer Skills  | YES | NO | I can't do this at all | This is very hard for me | I can do this, but not as well as I would like | I can do this well enough | Notes |
|--|-----|----|------------------------|--------------------------|--|---------------------------|-------|
| Turn on/off computer, monitor, printer                     |     |    |                        |                          |  |                           |       |
| Use a mouse  |     |    |                        |                          |  |                           |       |
| Use a keyboard   |     |    |                        |                          |  |                           |       |
| Recognize floppy & CD-RM disks                             |     |    |                        |                          |  |                           |       |
| Knows meaning of hourglass                                 |     |    |                        |                          |  |                           |       |
| Open a desktop (icon) software program                     |     |    |                        |                          |  |                           |       |
| Open a program using START menu                            |     |    |                        |                          |  |                           |       |
| Use a software program and navigate menus                  |     |    |                        |                          |  |                           |       |
| Name basic computer system parts                           |     |    |                        |                          |  |                           |       |
| Successfully Exit a program                                |     |    |                        |                          |  |                           |       |
| Use typing tutor to increase typing speed and accuracy     |     |    |                        |                          |  |                           |       |
| <b>Advanced Computer Skills</b>                            |     |    |                        |                          |  |                           |       |
| Minimize/maximize open programs                            |     |    |                        |                          |  |                           |       |
| Select appropriate software for a task                     |     |    |                        |                          |  |                           |       |
| Understand the difference between a program and a document |     |    |                        |                          |  |                           |       |
| Use help screens in software programs                      |     |    |                        |                          |  |                           |       |
| Add a graphic to a document                                |     |    |                        |                          |  |                           |       |

| Computer Skills  | YES | NO | I can't do this at all | This is very hard for me | I can do this, but not as well as I would like | I can do this well enough | Notes |
|--|-----|----|------------------------|--------------------------|--|---------------------------|-------|
| Use "Save as"  |     |    |                        |                          |  |                           |       |
| Windows 95   |     |    |                        |                          |  |                           |       |
| Create file for personal work  |     |    |                        |                          |  |                           |       |
| Minimize/maximize open programs  |     |    |                        |                          |  |                           |       |
| Use Start Menu   |     |    |                        |                          |  |                           |       |
| Change drives, from hard to floppy to CD-ROM drive                       |     |    |                        |                          |  |                           |       |
| Internet Skills  |     |    |                        |                          |  |                           |       |
| Use Netscape-Bookmarks or AOL-Favorite Places to get desired information |     |    |                        |                          |  |                           |       |
| Recognize a URL  |     |    |                        |                          |  |                           |       |
| Type a URL in the Open Box   |     |    |                        |                          |  |                           |       |
| Use Back and Forward commands  |     |    |                        |                          |  |                           |       |
| Locate and click on Links on a Web page                                  |     |    |                        |                          |  |                           |       |
| Use a search index like Yahoo to do a simple search for information      |     |    |                        |                          |  |                           |       |
| Scroll through "hits" and search   |     |    |                        |                          |  |                           |       |
| Print a Web page   |     |    |                        |                          |  |                           |       |
| Use net cards with a tutor to find a Web page and complete a project     |     |    |                        |                          |  |                           |       |

| Computer Skills   | YES | NO | I can't do this at all | This is very hard for me | I can do this, but not as well as I would like | I can do this well enough | Notes |
|---|-----|----|------------------------|--------------------------|--|---------------------------|-------|
| Demonstrate net cards at Tutor Training or Computer class             |     |    |                        |                          |  |                           |       |
| Use net cards independently to find a Web site and complete a project |     |    |                        |                          |  |                           |       |
| <b>E-Mail Skills</b>  |     |    |                        |                          |  |                           |       |
| Has a personal e-mail account with login, name, password              |     |    |                        |                          |  |                           |       |
| Can login to check personal e-mail                                    |     |    |                        |                          |  |                           |       |
| Write and send a message to a friend, co-worker, keypal or tutor      |     |    |                        |                          |  |                           |       |
| Send e-mail to more than one person                                   |     |    |                        |                          |  |                           |       |
| Get and read new e-mail   |     |    |                        |                          |  |                           |       |
| Respond to e-mail received  |     |    |                        |                          |  |                           |       |
| Exit e-mail program   |     |    |                        |                          |  |                           |       |
| Maintain e-mail account by saving and deleting messages               |     |    |                        |                          |  |                           |       |

| Computer Skills   | YES | NO | I can't do this at all | This is very hard for me | I can do this, but not as well as I would like | I can do this well enough | Notes |
|---|-----|----|------------------------|--------------------------|--|---------------------------|-------|
| Scan a photograph   |     |    |                        |                          |  |                           |       |
| Use programs like Print Shop, Crossword Creator or cooking Light and be able to create cards, calendars, shopping lists or puzzles and print them out |     |    |                        |                          |  |                           |       |
| <b>Word Processing Skills</b>   |     |    |                        |                          |  |                           |       |
| Create/save a new document  |     |    |                        |                          |  |                           |       |
| Open/close a document   |     |    |                        |                          |  |                           |       |
| Uses drop down menus  |     |    |                        |                          |  |                           |       |
| Uses undo/redo functions  |     |    |                        |                          |  |                           |       |
| Can move insertion point using mouse/arrow keys   |     |    |                        |                          |  |                           |       |
| Correct errors using backspace/delete keys  |     |    |                        |                          |  |                           |       |
| Cut and paste   |     |    |                        |                          |  |                           |       |
| Change font/font size/color   |     |    |                        |                          |  |                           |       |
| Format text (bold, italicize, underline, justify)   |     |    |                        |                          |  |                           |       |
| Set margins   |     |    |                        |                          |  |                           |       |
| Use Spell Check   |     |    |                        |                          |  |                           |       |
| Print document  |     |    |                        |                          |  |                           |       |

**LITERACY**

**WEBSITES**



## Literacy Websites

### Reading Comprehension

<http://wilearns.state.wi.us/apps/default.asp?cid=19#>

Wisconsin Literacy and Reading Network Source

### Leveled Books Database

<http://registration.beavton.k12.or.us/lbdb/>

This interactive database allows you to search for books that have been leveled using either the Reading Recovery or Guided Reading methodologies.

### Free On Line Books

<http://onlinebooks.library.upenn.edu/>

### Using News to Increase Vocabulary and Other Ways of Using U.S. News

<http://www.usnewsclassroom.com/waystouse/buildvoc.html>

### National Institute for Literacy

<http://www.nifl.gov/nifl/partnershipforreading/explore/vocabulary.html>

### Dolch Phrases

<http://www.createdbyteachers.com/dolchphrases.html>

### Fry's Instant Words

[http://connwww.iu5.org/cvelem/RR/Fry\\_Words.html](http://connwww.iu5.org/cvelem/RR/Fry_Words.html)

### Inferences

<http://www.springfield.k12.il.us/resources/languagearts/readingwriting/readinfer.html>

### Merriam-Webster Dictionary on Line

<http://www.m-w.com/>

### Web Resources for Reading

<http://www.dpi.state.wi.us/dpi/dlsis/cal/caltreer.html>

### Six Effective Comprehension Strategies

<http://wilearns.state.wi.us/apps/default.asp?cid=24>

Instructional Strategies

<http://enrollmentoptions.sandi.net/readingstrategies.html>

Adult Education Literacy

<http://www.literacy.uconn.edu/adlthome.htm>

Literacy Links

<http://www-tcall.tamu.edu/newsletr/dec96.htm>

Good Practice Strategies

A Review of Effective Practices in Adult Education and Literacy Classrooms

<http://www-tcall.tamu.edu/newsletr/dec96.htm#free>

It is usually harder to read words on lists than in stories. Word identification should **never** be used as the only estimate of reading level.

Assessing Comprehension

<http://wilearns.state.wi.us/apps/default.asp?cid=95>

Adult Learners with Learning Disabilities

<http://wilearns.state.wi.us/apps/default.asp?cid=663>

List of Teaching Learning Activities

<http://wilearns.state.wi.us/apps/default.asp?cid=18>

Visual Literacy

<http://wilearns.state.wi.us/apps/default.asp?cid=131>

Compound Words

<http://www.janbrett.com/piggybacks/compound.htm>

## **More Literacy Websites**

### **Rhyming Dictionary**

Over 15, 000 words.

<http://shop.scholastic.com/webapp/wcs/stores/servlet/SIGCatalogSearch>

### **Mavis Beacon Typing**

<http://www.broderbund.com/SubCategory.asp?CID=249>

### **Keyboarding: Rules and Tools**

<http://www.crews.org/curriculum/ex/compsci/keyboarding/questions.htm>

### **Wisconsin Literacy Education and Reading Network Source**

There are various word lists at this site: Most Useful Family Word Patterns

<http://www.wilearns.com/apps/default.asp?ap=2&Mode=OneWordList&Word=6>

Most Useful Word Family Words

<http://www.wilearns.com/apps/Default.asp?cid=522>

### **English**

<http://www.paulnoll.com/China/Teach/English-teaching-materials.html>

### **Contractions**

<http://www.mcwdn.org/contract/contract.html>

On line Quiz

### **Synonyms**

<http://www.manatee.k12.fl.us/sites/elementary/palmasola/syn6.htm>

On line practice

### **Basic Computer Terms**

<http://www.heightslibrary.org/basic.php>

### **Lists\*Vocabulary**

<http://iteslj.org/links/ESL/Vocabulary/Lists/>

### **Handy Word Lists**

<http://dictionary-thesaurus.com/Wordlists.html>

### **Fry Frequently Used Word List**

<http://www.solonschools.com/ART/Archive1999/FryWordList/fry.html>

# Employment

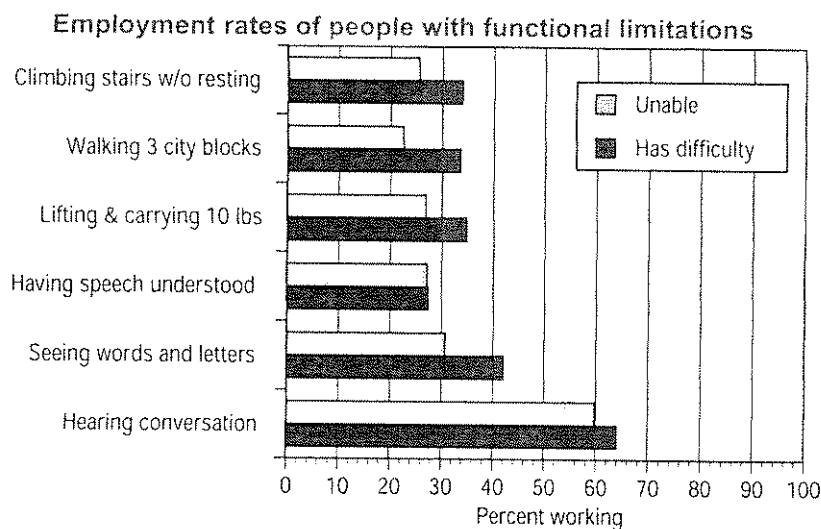
Employment rates for people with disabilities are shockingly low. According to data from the 1995 Current Population Survey (CPS), of the 16.9 million working-age Americans with health conditions or impairments that limit their ability to work, 12.1 million, or 72.2%, do not have jobs. For this group, employment would be the most direct route to greater social integration and fuller participation in mainstream life. Equally important is its potential as a path out of poverty for the 5.1 million—30% of the 16.9 million with work disabilities—who live below the poverty line.

A steady income is of critical importance, but it is only one of the many advantages of employment. A decent job can enhance self-worth, provide educational opportunities and skills training, give one's life structure and purpose, increase social contacts, and offer important fringe benefits such as health insurance, retirement pensions, travel opportunities, and paid vacation time. Lack of employment can lead to poverty, stagnation, loss of self-esteem, and isolation.

In the past, employment for people with certain disabilities often meant so-called *sheltered employment*—repetitive, often unskilled labor performed for low wages in a segregated environment, usually overseen by non-disabled supervisors. People with visual impairments might work at phone banks selling light bulbs, or those with mental retardation might be paid a few cents for each broom they assembled. These practices often exploited workers with disabilities, giving them few of the benefits of mainstream, *competitive employment*, such as financial independence and greater integration into society. Instead of marginalization and exploitation, people with disabilities want, need, and deserve equality and greater opportunity in the employment arena.

## Employment Statistics

Lack of opportunity prevents many people with disabilities from working. The vast majority—67.9%—of those with work disabilities are not even in the labor force, meaning that they are neither working nor actively looking for work. Of those in the labor force,



Source: 1994-95 Survey of Income and Program Participation

the unemployment rate of 13.4% is more than twice that for people without disabilities. A significant proportion of those with work disability say they are able to work, but are limited in the kind of jobs they can perform or in the length of their workday or workweek. The 1995 Current Population Survey classifies 6.5 million working-age Americans as limited but *not* prevented from working by their disability, of whom 2.5 million, or 38%, do not have jobs.

Employment rates vary greatly according to the nature and severity of the disability. According to 1994-95 data from the Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP), people with mobility impairments are the group least likely to be employed (roughly three-quarters do not have jobs), followed by blind people and those with mental retardation:

- only 22.0% of working-age wheelchair users and 27.5% of cane, crutch, or walker users are employed;
- only 25.5% of people unable to climb stairs, 22.5% of those unable to walk three city blocks, and 27.0% of those

unable to lift and carry 10 pounds have jobs;

- 30.8% percent of blind people ("unable to see words or letters") work, while 43.7% of those with visual impairment are employed;
- only 35.1% of those with mental retardation have jobs;
- among those with mental or emotional disorders or impairments, 41.3% are employed;
- 64.4% of working-age adults with hearing impairments hold jobs, while 59.7% of those "unable to hear normal conversation" are employed.

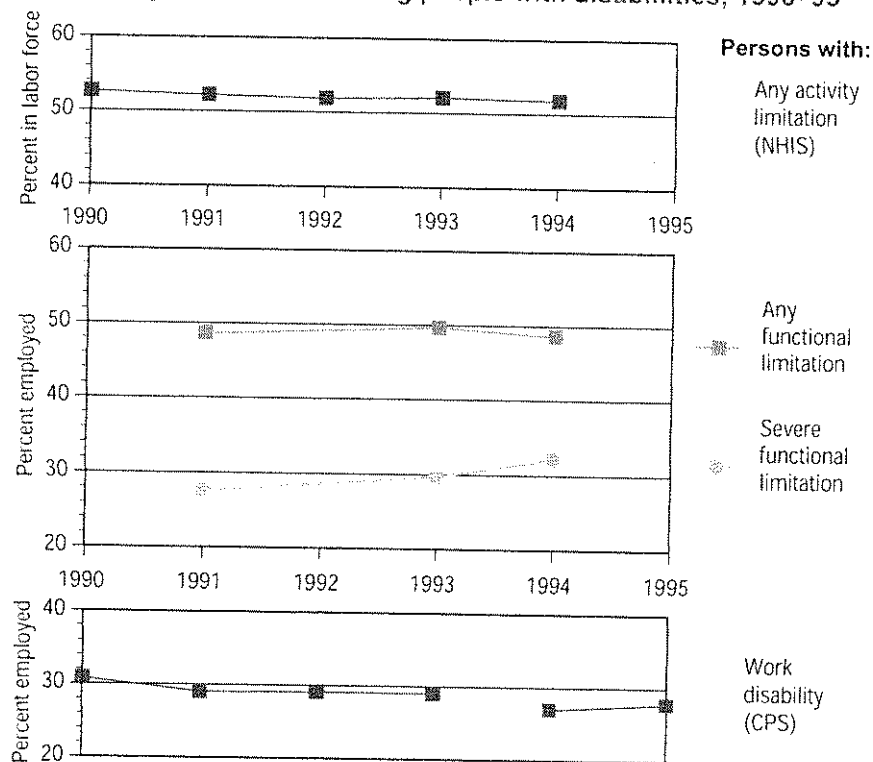
People with disabilities want to work. In a 1994 Harris poll, 79% of those without jobs said that they would prefer to be working. Within that group, 42% believed that they would be able to work if a suitable job could be found. Thus, people with disabilities have a strong work ethic, one that would propel a substantial number of them into the labor force if the right conditions were met—if they were offered decent jobs compatible

with their abilities and if barriers to employment were removed.

Although the Americans with Disabilities Act prohibits employers from discriminating on the basis of disability, data from four surveys fail to provide conclusive evidence of improvement in the employment status of people with disabilities:

- Data from the Survey of Income and Program Participation indicate that 32.2% of people considered to have *severe functional limitations* had jobs in late 1994, compared to 27.6% in late 1991. This increase is statistically significant. On the other hand, among people with *any degree of functional limitation*, the employment rate remained flat (48.6% in both 1991 and 1994).
- The employment rate for people with *work limitation* has also remained flat, as measured by the Current Population Survey: 27.8% of people with work disabilities had jobs in early 1995, compared to 29.0% in 1991 and 1993.
- The labor force participation rate has not changed significantly for people with *any activity limitation*, according to the National Health Interview Survey: The proportion of people either working or actively looking for work was 52.6% in 1990, 51.9% in 1992, and 51.8% in 1994.
- Harris poll respondents with *any disability* reported a 33% employment rate in 1986 compared to 31% in 1994—the difference is not statistically significant.

Employment trends among people with disabilities, 1990–95



Sources: National Health Interview Survey (NHIS),  
Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP),  
Current Population Survey (CPS)  
Note: 1994-5 CPS data not directly comparable with prior years.

## Supported Employment

Supported employment is an innovative approach to providing integrated employment for people with certain disabilities, in particular mental retardation, developmental disabilities, and mental illness. These groups have traditionally been shunted into so-called sheltered workplaces, in which make-work or piece-work activities are performed for little or no pay, and from which very few participants ever graduate to competitive work.

In contrast, *supported employment* is a form of assisted, competitive employment, in which on-the-job and other assistance is provided to workers who would otherwise not be able to take on mainstream jobs. Supported employment programs have enabled 105,000 people with severe disabilities to join the labor force, receiving real pay for real work.

Traditional vocational rehabilitation programs provide pre-employment training and job placement. In supported employment, however, "job coaches" go to the workplace to provide extra training and supervision to workers with disabilities, especially during the initial employment period, as well as to consult with employers and co-workers about problems that may develop. In addition, co-workers with and without disabilities can be enlisted to help reinforce skills, procedures, and schedules. People with disabilities either work singly with non-disabled co-workers or with others with similar disabilities in integrated settings.

Work is fully compensated at a regular wage, including the full benefits received by any other worker. One study indicated that 70% of supported employment workers at all levels of mental retardation retained their jobs for at least a year and that roughly 75% engaged in significant interactions with non-disabled co-workers.

It is too early to tell whether the ADA will ultimately succeed in increasing job opportunities. Its final employment provisions went into effect as recently as 1994, extending the anti-discrimination provisions to smaller companies of between 15 and 25 employees. Social change takes time, and job availability is influenced by economic factors unrelated to disability.

Furthermore, the statistics based on activity or work limitation should be interpreted with caution, since these measures may not be appropriate for detecting improvements in the employment situation of people with disabilities. A person who finds herself suitably employed, due to a job accommodation, may stop considering herself as limited in her ability to work, thus dropping out of the statistics entirely.

## Barriers to Employment

People with disabilities face many barriers to employment. Principal among them is employer attitudes, cited by 40% of Harris poll respondents who were not fully employed. Employers often have the misguided notion that a person with a disability cannot handle a regular job or will often be absent from work, or that job accommodations will be too costly. People with mental impairments are particularly victimized by discrimination, despite studies indicating high rates of satisfaction among employers who have hired such workers, at little or no cost in terms of accommodation. Those with other "hidden" disabilities also encounter especially severe biases.

Physical barriers also limit access to jobs: Without accessible transportation, a person with a disability may not be able to get to and from work. Architectural barriers, such as stairs, curbs, or narrow entryways, can prevent a

wheelchair user from leaving the house or entering a workplace. Obstacles in the work environment—desks at the wrong height, telephone receivers without amplification, inaccessible restrooms—can make it impossible to accept or remain at a job, in the absence of employer accommodations.

A comparatively low level of “human capital” can also limit job opportunities. In some cases, people with disabilities lack the education, skills, and experience that would make them fully competitive. People with disabilities often have less education and training than the average worker:

- while only 17.6% of non-disabled Americans lack a high school diploma, according to the 1992 National Health Interview Survey, the figure for people with disabilities is 33.3%;
- 34.5% of Americans without disabilities have college degrees, compared to only 9.6% of those with work disabilities;
- in the '94 Harris survey, 32% of people with disabilities cited lack of skills, education, or training as a reason they did not have full-time work.

Skills and training are often obtained on the job. Thus, people with limited employment histories often suffer by comparison to other workers who have held jobs throughout their adult lives.

Societal attitudes can be as much of an obstacle as any physical barrier. Public perception often equates disability with helplessness, and therefore inability to earn a living in a competitive environment. People with disabilities may not look for work because they do not believe they can overcome the barriers they face. They may not consider upgrading their skill levels, using technology to overcome

obstacles to their functioning at a job, or demanding accommodations from employers. Or they may be cautious, reluctant to risk losing benefits by entering an uncertain labor market. Some 31% of Harris poll respondents mentioned benefits or health insurance as reasons for not seeking employment.

### The Income Gap

Employment is crucial in keeping people with disabilities out of poverty. Among working-age people with disabilities who do not work, 39.7% live in poverty, according to the 1995 Current Population Survey (CPS), compared to 15.1% of those who work at least some of the time.

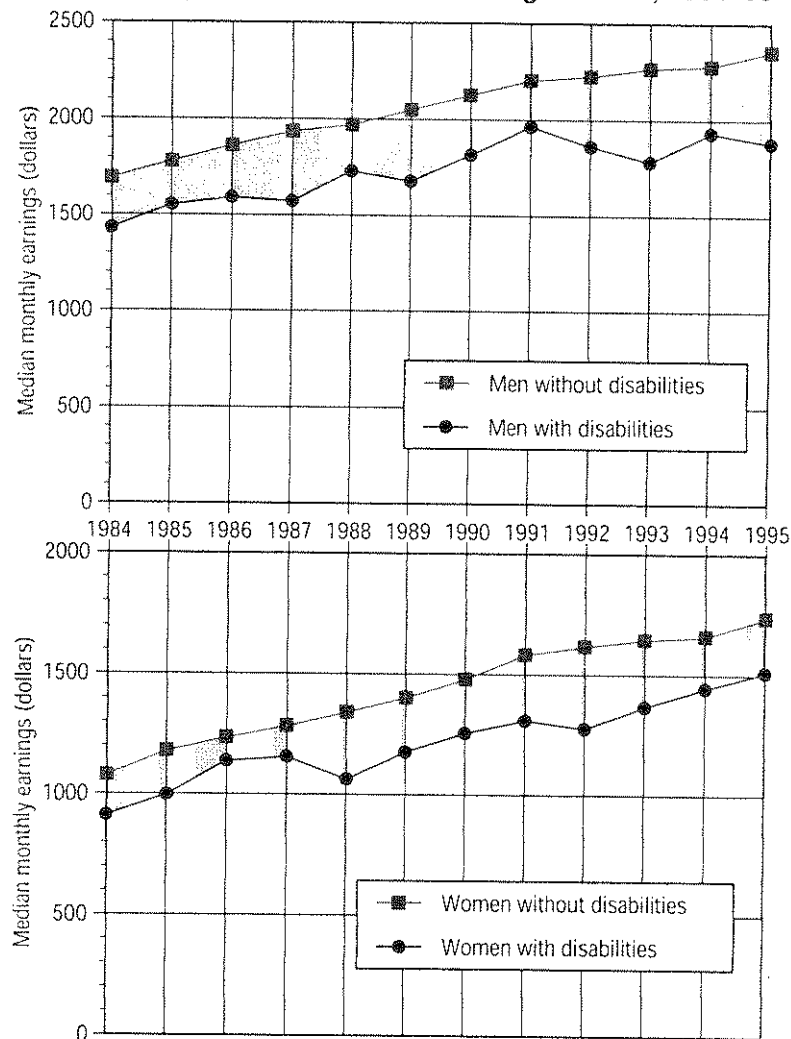
But even among those who do work, discrimination and other factors keep income levels of people with disabilities well below those of workers without disabilities. In 1995, men with disabilities earned on average only 72.1% of the amount non-disabled men earned annually, according to the Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP); women with disabilities made 72.6% as much as those without disabilities.

Although part of this gap is due to the greater rate of part-time employment among people with disabilities, income and poverty statistics show that even full-time work does not guarantee a living wage for people with disabilities. Considering people working full time during the entire year,

- the poverty rate of 4.6% among workers with disabilities is 60% greater than that of their non-disabled counterparts, according to data from the CPS;
- median monthly income for men with work disabilities averaged \$1,880 in 1995, according to the SIPP—20% less



## Earnings for Full-Time Workers Aged 16-64, 1984-95



Source: Survey of Income and Program Participation

than the \$2,356 earned by their counterparts without disabilities;

- women with disabilities earned \$1,511 monthly, or 13% less than the \$1,737 figure for non-disabled women.

Job discrimination is at least partly to blame for the income disparity. In the 1994 Harris poll, 30% of working-age people with disabilities said they had encountered job discrimination directly related to their disability. Of those respondents who experienced discrimination, 63% had been refused a job, 29% had been denied a promotion, 33% had been

given less responsibility than their co-workers, and 22% were paid less than co-workers doing similar work.

National statistics, both from the Harris poll and the SIPP, indicate that people with disabilities are underrepresented in executive and management positions and among business proprietors and overrepresented among unskilled workers and in the craft trades. Coupled with the reports of denied promotions, the dearth of people with disabilities in higher-paying positions may imply that a glass ceiling is preventing advancement to better jobs.

The income gap has only worsened during the past decade. According to data from the SIPP, men with work disabilities who had steady, full-time jobs earned 85% of the amount their non-disabled counterparts earned in 1984, compared to only 80% today. Poverty rates show a similar lack of improvement, according to the CPS: 14.8% of *working* people with work disabilities lived in poverty in 1989, compared to 15.1% in 1994; and 28.9% of *all* people with work disabilities lived in poverty in 1989, compared to 30.0% in 1994.

### **Workplace Accommodations: Inexpensive and Effective**

A major goal of the ADA is to enable more people with disabilities to succeed in the labor force. Employers must provide "reasonable accommodations" to employees and job applicants who have disabilities, so long as these accommodations do not impose an "undue burden" on the employer. Despite the misconception that the cost of job accommodations is high, the facts indicate the opposite: The Job Accommodation Network (JAN), an information service sponsored by the President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities, reports that the cost of accommodations is typically very low, around \$200 per employee with a disability. A recent Annenberg study of job accommodations made by Sears, Roebuck and Co. nationally found an even lower typical cost of less than \$50.

Of the accommodations JAN recommends, many (17%) require no expenditure whatsoever. Such accommodations might include rearranging an office to provide more maneuvering room, allowing a technician to sit for part of his work day, giving a job applicant with a learning disability extra time to take a test, or

providing a reserved parking space to an employee with a mobility impairment. In the Sears study, a majority (69%) of accommodations incurred *no* direct cost, generally involving changes to work rules or schedules, job reassignments, or enhanced training or supervision.

In addition to the 17% that cost nothing, a further 52% of JAN's recommended job accommodations cost employers less than \$500. Examples include purchasing wrist pads for a computer user with repetitive stress injury, a phone amplifier for a hearing impaired employee, an ergonomic chair for a back problem, or a special computer screen for someone with a visual impairment. An employer might hire a sign language interpreter for a training session, install soundproofing to enable a worker with a brain injury to concentrate, or install a railing in the restroom.

The level of employer satisfaction with such job accommodations is striking. JAN's numbers reveal that 82% of *employers* found the accommodations they made to be "extremely effective" or "very effective." More than half (53%) reported that they had been able to hire or retain a skilled employee, with the accommodation resulting in improved productivity. Many reported that the modifications they'd made had saved them the trouble and expense of hiring and training someone new. In general, employers reported substantial financial *benefit* as a consequence of small investments of time and/or money in accommodating workers with disabilities. At Sears, for example, administrative costs of replacing an employee average around \$2000, a figure much greater than their typical accommodation costs.

Results from a 1995 Harris poll of employers confirm the low cost and high employer

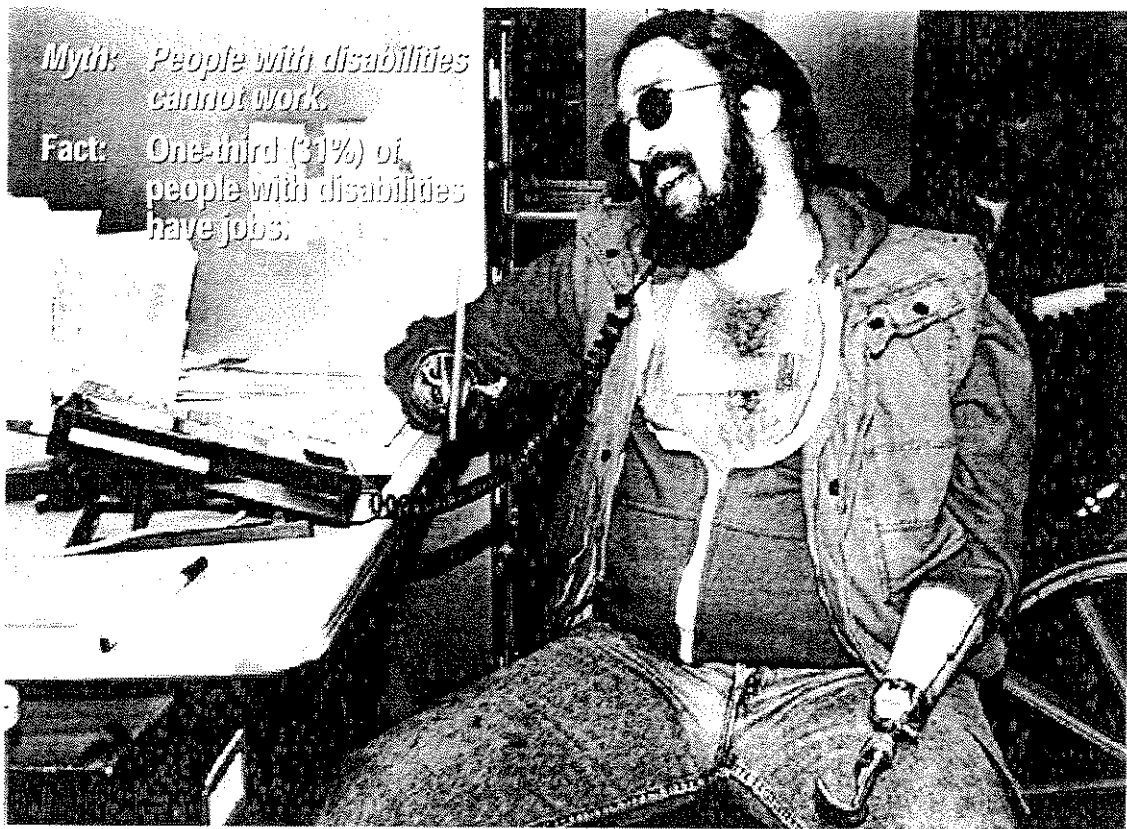


Photo: Shirley Nakao

satisfaction associated with reasonable accommodations:

- While 81% of employers have made accommodations for workers with disabilities (up from 51% in 1986), only 27% say that it costs more to employ a person with a disability than one without.
- Fully 82% say that the ADA "is worth the cost of implementation," and 80% report that the cost of accommodating people with disabilities has increased "a little or not at all" since passage of the ADA.
- A large majority (66%) also report that the amount of litigation has not increased as a result of the ADA.

### Assistive Technology as a Gateway to Employment

Just as wheelchairs allow users to overcome mobility limitations, assistive technology can serve as a gateway to employment for people with certain types of disabilities. Electronic innovations, in particular, can help people with sensory and other impairments to perform tasks otherwise beyond their capabilities. In the '94 Harris Poll, 26% of respondents said that they would need special equipment or technology to perform the kinds of jobs they preferred.

Assistive technology has proved successful in accommodating jobs for people with disabilities. For example, a set of telecommunications devices for the deaf (TDDs) enables a deaf bank teller to communicate with customers by typing, a Braille printer allows a blind radio

announcer to read the news off the wire service, a tape recorder provides task reminders to an office worker with a mental disorder, and a computer program helps a programmer with a learning disability to communicate more clearly in writing. In an advanced use of assistive technology, people with cerebral palsy and other conditions that severely limit both speech and mobility can communicate effectively through a device called a "liberator," which combines an innovative keyboard, a computer, and a speech synthesizer. Although these devices may be more expensive than typical job accommodations, their cost is not prohibitive for most employers, and the benefits of employing the person with the disability generally outweigh the expense.

In the absence of government subsidies, people with disabilities may not be able to afford such equipment for home use, thus preventing them from gaining skills that might make them more competitive in the job market. Harris poll data indicate that, despite the ubiquitousness of computer technology in the general population, it is not always available to people with disabilities. Only about 1/4 of 1% mentioned using a personal computer as "special equipment or technology," and although 10% said they needed a computer, a screen enlarger, special keyboard or input device, speech synthesizer, or voice recognition software in order to perform their preferred job, only 1.3% actually owned such equipment.

### Conclusions

Despite the equal opportunity provisions of the ADA, the evidence for increased employment rates for people with disabilities is not yet convincing. Because having a job can not only provide an escape from poverty

## Key Points

- A large majority—72.2%—of working-age Americans with work disabilities do not have jobs. Nearly a third (30%) live in poverty.
- The unemployment rate for people with disabilities, 13.4%, is more than twice that of those without disabilities.
- People with mobility impairments, blindness, and mental retardation are the least likely to have jobs. Those with hearing impairments are the most likely to be working.
- A large majority (79%) of people with disabilities who are not employed would rather be working. Of these, 42% say they would be able to work if a suitable job could be found.
- The low employment rate for people with disabilities has not gone up substantially since the passage of the ADA.
- Employer attitudes are a principal barrier faced by people with disabilities who are looking for work: 30% of working-age people with disabilities have encountered job discrimination.
- Low levels of "human capital"—education, skills, and experience—often make finding a job difficult for people with disabilities.
- Working people with disabilities earn substantially less than their non-disabled counterparts—roughly 72 cents to the dollar.
- Workplace accommodations for people with disabilities are effective and inexpensive, averaging around \$200 per employee.
- Although assistive technology could improve the employability of many people with disabilities, greater access to such equipment is needed.
- Vocational rehabilitation can be effective, but it is not widely available.

and dependency, but also lead to a fuller life and a greater integration into society, increasing job opportunities should remain a major focus of disability policy. Employing people with disabilities is beneficial not only to those who get jobs, but to employers and to society at large.

Discrimination must be addressed through employer education and more rigorous enforcement of the law. Employers need to be better educated about the capabilities of workers who have disabilities, about the efficacy and low cost of job accommodations, and about the high level of satisfaction among those employers who have made efforts to hire and retain workers with disabilities. More training and support is also needed to help employers who are unfamiliar with the needs of workers with disabilities or who lack the resources to make their work environment more hospitable. In addition, better enforcement of anti-discrimination provisions of the ADA is needed, in order to convey a clear message that people with disabilities have a right to fair treatment in the workplace.

Public policy also must change to promote employment instead of dependency. The U.S. government currently spends forty times as much on cash benefits for people with disabilities as it does on enabling them to work. Government funded vocational rehabilitation programs have a success rate of 43 to 63%, depending on the disability, in placing clients in competitive, full-time employment, but only 10% of new SSI and SSDI beneficiaries are offered such services. People with disabilities must be afforded greater access to vocational rehabilitation, job placement, and supported employment programs.

Our society must invest in improving the "human capital"—education, skills, job experience—of people with disabilities in order to make them fully competitive. Education and skills can greatly enhance a person's job prospects, but people with disabilities frequently lack the training and experience necessary to acquire a decent job. Past discrimination is often at the root of such deficiencies, which must be compensated for by educational and training programs to improve job opportunities.

# Myths and Facts

*Myth: People with disabilities do not have jobs because their disability prevents them from working.*

**Fact:** Many people with disabilities (31%) do work, and many more (at least an additional 23%) could work if offered suitable jobs.

*Myth: People who are blind or deaf, or who have cerebral palsy, quadriplegia, or other severe disabilities, cannot be employed in ordinary jobs.*

**Fact:** A blind programmer can use a computer equipped with a speech synthesizer. A deaf bank teller can communicate with customers using a telecommunications device. A person with cerebral palsy can get around on the job using a motorized wheelchair, and communicate with co-workers using a special keyboard and synthesizer device. Many functional limitations can be overcome through creative use of technology.

*Myth: People with mental retardation and other mental impairments can't hold steady jobs.*

**Fact:** Many people with mental impairments do work. Supported employment helps people with mental retardation hold regular, full-time, paid jobs.

*Myth: People with disabilities can get government handouts, and so they don't want to work.*

**Fact:** Some 79% of people with disabilities who do not work say that they would rather be working.

*Myth: The ADA has meant equal employment for people with disabilities.*

**Fact:** The national employment rate for people with disabilities remains low, even after the implementation of the ADA.

## Data Sources

Employment and poverty rates from the 1994 and 1995 Current Population Surveys are derived from unpublished tabulations provided by John M. McNeil, U.S. Bureau of the Census. Employment rates from the 1990–93 Current Population Surveys come from the *Poverty in the United States* series of reports published by the U.S. Bureau of the Census.

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Labor force rates from the National Health Interview Survey are derived from an analysis in: Trupin, L., Sebesta, D. S., Yelin, E., & LaPlante, M.P. (1997) *Trends in Labor Force Participation Among Persons with Disabilities, 1983–1994* (Disability Statistics Report 10): U.S. Department of Education, National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research.

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